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Ballads of the Marathas

RENDERED INTO ENGLISH VERSE FROM
THE MARATHI ORIGINALS

BY

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समर्पण

माझ्या गुणदोष परीक्षकां मध्यें

परम सुशिक्षित

परम सुज्ञ

आणि परम कृपाळु

अशा माझ्या प्रिय मातेच्या

स्मरणार्थ.

INTRODUCTION

In presenting to my readers this humble attempt to popularise some of the ballads of the Marathas, it may not be out of place to submit a slight sketch of the early history and the poetic literature of the people whose national energies they commemorate. The Maratha race has been for centuries, and is still, among the most important of those which inhabit the Indian Peninsula. The three most powerful of the Hindu princes who acknowledge allegiance to the Imperial Crown of Britain, viz. Sindia, Holkar, and the Gaikwar, are Marathas, and their court language is Marathi, though this is not the language of the countries over which they rule. But every one of these three princes has his ancestral home in the Maratha Deccan and bears a Marathi name. The same is the case with the princely house of Tanjore. The Maratha ditch at Calcutta testifies to exploits at a scene even more distant from Maharashtra, and on the fatal day of Paniput the Maratha armies upheld the cause of India against the Afghan invader fifty miles to the northward of Delhi, the capital of the Great Mogul.

The British dominion, quelling all internal aggression by a might too great to be contested, has left no opportunity of judging whether the flood-tide of Maratha success would ever have ebbed back into its ancient boundaries, or even have been there overwhelmed by the waves of a newer and more vigorous race of Asiatic conquerors; but during the years when India was 'becoming red,' the Marathas were

probably still the most powerful political integer within it, and if the British flag were withdrawn again into the ocean, and if (an impossible 'if') no other European power intruded, I at least believe that once again, from the Punjab to Cape Comorin, princes and people would listen to the thundering tramp of the Maratha horsemen.

The Marathas claim to be the people of the Maharashtra, or great nation. There has been much speculation as to the origin of the word Maratha. Some take it from Rathod, the name of a Rajput clan, with the prefix *maha*, or great. I believe the word Rathod is in fact derived from nearly the same source as the word Maratha, that is, from the word Ratta, or Rathakuda (राष्ट्रकूट or रथकूड). Some deduce Maratha from Maharashtra, and some from the word Marahatta (मरहट); others hold it to be a corruption of the word Maharatha, or Maha-ratta. Dr. Bhandarkar, in his history of the Deccan, observes that from cave inscriptions it is apparent that from early times tribes of Kshatriyas or Warriors, calling themselves Bhojas or Rathis, were predominant in the country, and that, in the northern part of the Deccan or Maharashtra, they called themselves Maharathis or Great Rathis, but that in other places the name in use must have been Rathis or Rathas. That the name Ratha, or rather Ratta, was common in the Southern Maratha country, is made clear from the interesting account of old inscriptions relating to the Ratta chieftains of Belgaum and Saundatti published by Mr. J. F. Fleet, C.I.E., of the Indian Civil Service (Journal R. A. Society, x. 167-298). In ancient copper-plate grants, as well as inscriptions, we often meet the word Maharatha (महारठ), and I am inclined to think that the derivation from Maha-ratta is correct. A race is sometimes named after a country, sometimes a country after a race. The Sassenachs of Scotland are called Scotch because they live in Scotland, though they have no

affinity to the race which has given its name to the country. England is called England after the Angles or English, who were by no means the most important section of the Danish or Low Dutch invaders. I think it probable that the name Maharashtra was derived or Sanskritised from the word Maharatta, that is, a race of Maharathas or great warriors, and not that the word Maratha comes by the inverse process from Maharashtra. The best proof of this is that the land of the Marathas is known in their early Puranas as Dakshinapatha or Dandakaranya, and not Maharashtra. At any rate, whether the word Maratha is derived from Maharathod, Mara-hatta, Maha-rashtra, or Maharatha, there is little doubt that it is meant to signify a race brave and hardy, and probably pugnacious.

The earliest mention of the word Maharatta that I know of is in connection with a deputation of missionaries to various countries by King Ashoka to propagate the faith of Gautama Buddha. In the Mahavanso (Turnour's 'Maha-'vanso,' pp. 71, 72) the Buddhist monarch is described as deputing 'the hero Maha Dhammarakkitto' (Mahadhumra-kettu? Phœbus, what a name!) 'to *Maharatta*,' and further on we read in the same work that 'the sanctified disciple 'Maha Dhammarakkitto repairing to Maharatta there 'preached the Mahanarada Kassapa Jataka of Buddha, and 'that eighty-four thousand persons attained the sanctification 'of Magga, and thirteen thousand were ordained priests by 'him' (Ibid. p. 74). In the cave inscriptions at Karle and Bedsa, which are supposed to belong to a period between the 1st and 4th centuries A.D., we find the words Maharatha and Maharathini. One of them records 'the religious gift 'of Mahabhoja's daughter Samadinika the Mahadevi Maha-'rathini and wife of Apadevanak,' and another commemorates the gift of a lion pillar, 'Sinha Sthambha,' from 'Agimitranak, son of Goti, a great warrior, a Maharatta.'

Little or nothing is known of the history of the Marathas before the Christian era. In the first century of the Christian era they rose to prominence under their King Shalivahana. There are many traditions current concerning this monarch in the Maharashtra. Though differing in details, they confirm the belief that he waged war with King Vikrama of Oojein, and that in one of their several battles the latter suffered a crushing defeat at the hands of Shalivahana. Vikrama was driven beyond the Nerbudda, and begged for peace, which was concluded on terms which preserved Vikrama's power and era north of the Nerbudda.

There is a difference of 135 years (not 133 as stated by Grant Duff) between the eras of Shalivahana and Vikrama, and Grant Duff founds on this difference the remark that 'the eras themselves refute this story, unless we suppose 'that Vikramajit had prior claims to sovereignty and that 'the era was reckoned from the time of some of his fore-'fathers'; but to this it is to be replied, first, that there are two eras of Vikrama, one current in India north of the Nerbudda, and the other in Kashmir, and, secondly, that the name Vikrama denotes not an individual but a dynasty, like Pharaoh, or Tudor, or Stuart. The Rajatarangini (a history of the kings of Kashmir), a work admitted by such scholars as Colebrooke and Turnour to be an authentic record of historical events, establishes the fact that the Vikrama who conquered Kashmir, and established his power and era there, was a contemporary of Shalivahana, the Maratha king.

The birth and career of Shalivahana are of course to some extent mythical. He is variously spoken of as the son of a Kunbi or husbandman, and of a Koombar or potter. But there is no dispute as to his being a Maratha. He was called Satavahana as well as Shalivahana. After defeating Vikrama he made Paithan his capital. According to Jinaprabhu, a

Jain writer (*v.* Journal, B. B. R. A. S., x. 134, 135), during the reign of Satavahana the city of Pratishthan (Paithan) became very rich, having wide roads, large temples and houses, brilliantly white markets, strong walls and wide ditches, and Satavahana having freed all the people of Dakshanipatha (Maharashtra) from debt, and conquered the country as far as the Tapti, introduced his era into it. Describing the city of Paithan, the writer breaks forth into the following eulogium: 'The city of Pratisthana is the jewelled head ornament of 'the glory of Maharashtra, and is beautified by pleasure-'giving palaces, and chaityas (temples) cooling to the eyes. 'It contains 68 sacred places for the public, and within its 'walls as 50 heroes were born, it was called the city of 'heroes' (Journal, B. B. R. A. Society, x. 135). Shalivahana was a patron of learning, and an author, and wrote several works in the Maharashtri language. To this subject I shall revert further on.

There is no continuous record or tradition as to Shalivahana's successors, but it is generally believed that his dynasty ruled at Paithan till the close of the third century A.D., when it was overthrown by the powerful Maratha house of the Rashtrakutas. Here and there, however, the cave inscriptions of Pandoo Lena in Nasik and Nanaghaut in Junnar afford us a glimpse of the doings of the earlier dynasty. In a very long inscription at Nasik a king named Satakarni Gautamiputra is described as having 'rooted out 'the dynasty of Kshatriya and established the glory of the 'Satavahana family.' He is spoken of as King of Kings and ruler of Asika Asmaka (?), Surashtra (Soreth in Kattyawar), Kuraka (?), Aparanta (Konkan), Anup (?), Vaidarbha (Berar), and Akaravanti (Malva). His commands were obeyed by many kings, and his beasts of burden drank the waters of the three seas. He was descended from a long line of kings. He appointed places and times for religion

and for worldly duties. He humbled the pride of the Kshatriyas and punished the Shakas (Scythians?), Yavanas (Bactrians?), and Palhavas (Campbell's 'Bombay Gazetteer,' xvi. 553, 554). At a cave at Nanaghaut in Junnar eight figures, now almost defaced, were sculptured in a recess, with the following names above them:—1, राया सीमुक सातवाहन King Simuk Satavahan; 2 and 3, देवी नायनिकाया रण्णोच सीरी सातकणिनो, *i.e.*, of Queen Nayanika and King Shri Satkarni; 4, कुमारो भायो, *i.e.*, Prince Bhaya; 5 (illegible); 6, महारथी गणकडरो, *i.e.*, the great Marathi leader or hero; 7, कुमारो हकु सीरी, *i.e.*, Prince Haku Shri; and 8, कुमारो सातवाहनो, *i.e.*, Prince Satavahana (Campbell's 'Bombay Gazetteer,' xxxiii. 221). From the above it appears that several kings of the Shalivahana or Satavahana dynasty flourished, that at one time their power was on the decline, but that it was re-established by the king, Satakarini. The era of Shalivahana is still observed throughout the Maharashtra, and on the 1st of the month of Chaitra (March-April), which is new year's day, flags are erected before the house of every well-born Maratha in memory of the great victory of Shalivahana over Vikrama.

The house of Shalivahana is believed to have been succeeded by that of the Rashtrakutas, who ruled over the Marathas till the beginning of the sixth century A.D. About this date Jayasinha of the Chalukya family defeated Rudraraja, the reigning king of the Rashtrakuta house, and established the supremacy of the Chalukyas in the Maharashtra. Pulakesi, sixth in descent from Jayasinha, was the most powerful of the monarchs of this line. Soon after his accession (A.D. 611?) he assumed the title Satyashraya Shri Prithwi Vallabha Maharaja, *i.e.*, the Abode of Truth, the illustrious Lord of Earth, the great King. Having strengthened himself with this awe-inspiring addition, he proceeded to war against the Kadambas, whom he defeated,

and captured their chief town, Banavasi. He also reduced to subjection the Maurya kings of the Konkan. With a fleet of hundreds of ships he attacked the town of Puri,* which was the Lakshmi or Mistress of the Northern Sea, and the kings of Latas (Malva) and Gurjara were humbled by him to the extent of becoming his vassals (Bhandarkar's 'Deccan'). Pulakesi's fame spread throughout the length and breadth of India, and, according to an Arabic writer, his ambassadors were seen even at the court of Chosroes who reigned in Persia in A.D. 628 (Ibid.). One feat remained to be performed. This was the subjugation of Harshavardhan, king of Kanoj (Oude), who was vexing the frontiers of the Maharashtra. This was duly achieved, Harshvardhan was severely defeated, and Pulakesi thereupon assumed the further titulary distinction of Parameshwar or Lord Paramount (Ibid.). It was during Pulakesi's reign that the celebrated Chinese traveller Hwan Thsang visited the Maharashtra. He describes the country, its king, people, and climate at some length. He says that the king is a man of large and profound ideas, and liberal in his benefactions, and proceeds: 'The natives are tall, haughty, 'supercilious in character' (no one would describe the Marathas in this way nowadays). 'Their manners are 'simple and honest. If any one insult them, they will risk 'their lives to wipe out the affront. If any one come to 'them in difficulty, they will forget themselves to care for 'them. When they have an injury to avenge, they never

* The locality of this town baffles conjecture. Professor Wilson (Journal, B. B. R. A. S., ii. 896) holds that it was Thana; Mr. A. K. Nairne suggests that it might be Gharapuri or Elephanta (Nairne's 'Konkan,' p. 20), an island in Bombay Harbour, the caves on which form one of the stock objects of interest to visitors to Bombay; and Mr. Campbell is of opinion that it may be the Moreh landing or Bhandar at the north-east end of Gharapuri, where many ancient remains have been found ('Bombay Gazetteer,' xiii. 428).

'fail to give warning to their enemy, after which each dons 'his cuirass, and grasps his spear. In battle they pursue 'the fugitives, but do not kill those who yield. When a 'general of theirs is defeated, they do not punish him 'corporeally, but make him wear women's clothes, and thus 'by shame drive him to commit suicide. The state main- 'tains a body of dauntless champions to the number of 'several hundreds. Every time they prepare for combat, 'they intoxicate themselves with wine, and then one of 'them with a spear in hand will defy a thousand enemies. 'If they kill a man casually met on the road, the law does 'not punish them. Whenever the army goes forth to war, 'these braves march in the van to the sound of the drum. 'They also intoxicate hundreds of fierce elephants. When 'they have to attack, they drink strong liquor and run 'forward in a body, trampling everything beneath their 'feet, and nothing can withstand them. The king, proud 'of possessing these men and elephants, despises and slights 'the neighbouring monarchs.' The traveller's account does not, I think, inspire a belief in any special acuteness of observation on his part.

Six kings of the Chalukya house reigned in succession after Pulakesi. This line seems to have been engaged in a more or less constant struggle for supremacy with the representatives of its predecessor, the Rashtrakutas, but, in spite of this, amity seems to have been generally maintained between them, and intermarriages were not uncommon. Indraraja of the Rashtrakuta house, married a maiden of the Chalukyas, and from this union was born Dantidurga, who about the year 756 A.D. with a choice body of soldiers defeated Kirtiwarman, the last of the Chalukya line, and thus restored to the Rashtrakutas the dominion over the Maharashtra. To Krishnaraya, who succeeded Dantidurga, are attributed some of the cave excavations of

Ellora. Govind III. is said to have been the greatest of the kings of the restored Rashtrakuta house. He acquired much new territory and subdued many kings (Bhandarkar's 'Deccan'). The whole country between the Nerbudda and Toongabhadra rivers was under his immediate rule, and he was Lord Paramount of the land from Malwa in the north to Kanchipura (Conjeveram) in the south (Ibid.).

The Rashtrakuta dynasty remained in power until the year 973 A.D., when Kakkhal, the last of its princes, was defeated and dethroned by Tailapa of the Chalukyas, who thus once more gained the ascendant. Twelve kings of his race reigned after Tailapa. Of these the most powerful was Vikramditya II., who seems to have been a wise man as well as a strong ruler. He was an eminent patron of learning. Bilhan, the celebrated author of Rajatarangini, was favoured by him and received the title of Vidyapati, or Lord of Learning. A still greater scholar, Vijnyaneshwar, the author of the Mitakshara, the standard authority on Hindu law and customs among the Marathas, also flourished under this king.

The last of the Chalukya kings was Vira Soma or Someshwar IV. He was attacked by the petty Yadava chiefs Vira Ballal and Bhillam, the large army which he sent under his general, Bomma, was completely defeated, and with this battle the sovereignty of the Maharashtra passed into the hands of the Yadavas of Devagiri, who held it until the Mahomedan invasion. Grant Duff conjectures that there must have been several semi-independent chiefs or kinglets in the Maharashtra, and there can be no doubt of the justness of this surmise. Dr. Bhandarkar holds that there were several branches of the Chalukya family, and the discovery of a copper-plate grant of Shaka 1182 or A.D. 1260 (Journal, B. B. R. A. S., vol. v.) confirms this. The sketch I have given of the Rashtrakuta and Chalukya

dynasties shows that the supremacy of the one over the other did not mean the extirpation of the latter, but simply its reversion for a longer or shorter time to the position of a tributary. These were the two most powerful houses or families in the country, but not the only ones which could claim semi-royal rank. The Selar, Silar, or Silahar house was scarcely less famous, though it never attained the paramount power. There were several branches of this line, the most powerful being that which ruled over the North Konkan. Arikesari Devraj was probably the ablest of these kinglets. Shristhana or Thana was his capital, and he is described ('Asiatic Researches,' i. 357) as having governed the whole Konkan, consisting of 1400 villages or townships, with cities and other places conquered by him. There are still Marathi families in the Konkan bearing the name of Selar, as well as of Chalke or Chalukya, and it will be noticed that the name of Tanaji Maloosre's uncle, who was with him in the escalade of Singhur, was Shelar (ballad on the escalade of Singhur, line 139 *et infra*). The political condition of the country was in fact exactly what one would have expected to find; a lord paramount, who, if he was a man of character and ability, maintained his power within and extended it without, and, if he was not, ran the risk of being displaced, and sometimes was displaced, by a powerful tributary; the tributaries, chiefs or reguli, ruling each over territories which increased or diminished in the same way, according as circumstances were favourable or the reverse, and the ruler capable or feeble.

The Yadava lord paramount Bhillam founded the city of Devagiri, Doulatabad, and fixed his capital there. He died in 1113 A.D. and was succeeded by his son Jaitrapal, more commonly called Jaitugi, who has left behind him the reputation of having been a patron of learning, well versed in the Vedas. He died in 1210 A.D., and his son Sinhghana

succeeded him. As his name, the lion king, testifies, he was a powerful monarch, the most powerful of all the Yadava kings. He fought with the kings of Mathura (near Ajmir) and Kashi (Benares) and killed them on the battle-field. He defeated Bhoja, king of Panhala, and the king of Malwa. He frequently invaded Gujarat and defeated its kings, while his general, Bichana, humbled the Rattas of the Southern Maratha country, the Kadambas of Goa, and Guttas, Pandyas, and Hoysalas of Southern India, and erected a triumphal column on the banks of the Kaveri. Sinhghana was succeeded by his grandsons Krishna and Mahadev in succession. But, except the conquest of the Konkan (which, however, cannot have been formerly independent, and had no doubt revolted), nothing of importance is recorded of these kings. Mahadev defeated Someshwar, the Silahara king of the Konkan, and annexed the country. When Mahadev died in 1271 A.D., Ramchandradev, commonly called Rama Dev Rane, came to the throne. His reign was memorable on many accounts. In his time flourished Hemad Pant, to whom the invention of the Modi character is attributed, and one more famous still, namely Dnyana Dev, the author of the great poem Dnyaneshwari. But there are sadder reasons to a Maratha for remembering the reign of Rama Dev. For some time the Mahomedan power had been established at Delhi, but it was in this reign that, under the ruthless Alla-ud-din Khilji, the Mussulmans first invaded the Maharashtra. Appearing suddenly before Devagiri with eight thousand choice troops, Alla-ud-din defeated the Maratha monarch and reduced him to the rank of a tributary to the crown of Delhi. This was but the beginning of the end. In A.D. 1309 Rama Dev died. His son, Shanker, who succeeded him, repudiated the supremacy of Delhi and refused tribute. Malik Kafur was sent against him, and a battle was fought in which Shanker

was defeated and slain, an event immediately followed by the capture of Devagiri, and the establishment within it, in its new name of Doulatabad, of a central Mahomedan authority.

Thus, as in other parts of India, so in the Maharashtra, the sceptre passed away from the lords of the soil, and for 350 years or more the Marathas had to bear the yoke of the Mahomedan invader. Mahomedan dynasties, independent of Delhi, were established in the heart of the Maharashtra, the Nizam Shahi at Ahmednagar, the Adil Shahi at Beejapore, and it was to these princes that the Maharashtra was mostly subordinate. The Mogul emperors at Delhi, eager to extend their authority in any direction, and wholly ignorant of the existence of any force in the Deccan other than Mahomedan which it was needful to take into account, did the Marathas the service of subverting and destroying these dynasties of their own faith, and when they had done so found that they had supplanted the only powers which might have had a chance of keeping the Marathas in restraint. The responsibility for this folly does not belong to the narrow-minded Aurangzib alone. It must be shared by his predecessors, Akber and Shah Jehan, both of them statesmen of far more than average capacity. The first attack on the Nizam Shahi dynasty of Ahmednagar was made in the reign of Akber, and it was finally subverted in that of Shah Jehan. Beejapore was besieged by Shah Jehan in A.D. 1620, again by Aurangzib in 1679, and finally captured and the Adil Shahi dynasty subverted by the latter in 1687. It had, at that time, been greatly weakened by the Marathas, but the Mogul emperor is responsible for its final extinction. If Akbar and Shah Jehan had had the same opportunities as were presented to the purblind eyes of Aurangzib of estimating the importance of the Maratha power, it is possible they would have understood the Mahomedan interest better, and that these

local bulwarks would have been strengthened instead of being swept away, but, after all, autocracy is a bad school of political vision, and even these great men might have failed to appreciate the volume and energy of the forces which lay slumbering among the despised Hindus of the Deccan. At all events, when Shiwaji, the first, and by far the greatest, of modern Maratha princes, was born, nothing could be more certain than that the hour and the man had both come.

The father of Shiwaji, Shahji, of the house of Bhonsla, was an enterprising partisan captain, who served the king of Beejapore with honour and profit to both of them. He was married, a connexion considerably beyond his pretensions by birth, to Jeejabai, daughter of Lukhji Yadavarao of Sindkhed, a descendant (at least this is the probable supposition) of the old royal house of Devagiri. Their second son, Shiwaji Bhonsla, was born in the year 1627 at the fort of Shiwner. He was the favourite of his mother, a woman of strong character and high ambition, and he was brought up with her at Poona under the general superintendence of Dadaji Kondev, an able Brahman adherent of his father. He never learned to read or write, but was proficient in horsemanship, the use of arms, and all other manly exercises, and was particularly fond of the legendary history of the Hindus, set forth in the Mahabharat and Ramayana, and of the dramatic entertainments called Kathas. His devotion to his mother and her influence over him have passed into proverbs, and during her lifetime she was his counsellor in every enterprise of importance. I do not propose to give here any continuous sketch of a career so well known as that of Shiwaji. It may not be out of place, however, to remark that, whereas at the date of his first exploit, the capture of the fort of Torna in 1646, there was not in the whole of the Maharashtra one yard of ground in the independent possession of a Maratha, far less any

independent Maratha prince, at his death he had raised himself to the position, actual as well as titular, of Maharaja, and possessed, by the right of the strongest as well as the enthusiastic devotion of his subjects, a large part of the Konkan, as well as of the Maharashtra, much of Baglana and Khandeish, and extensive areas of the Carnatic and Tanjore. But his mere acquisitions constitute an altogether imperfect measure of the power he exercised and evoked. No man perhaps then living had a keener and juster appreciation of his own strength and the weak points of his opponents. He alone among his countrymen thoroughly gauged the sources and the direction of both. He saw that the time had come when the Maratha nation might be made anew, and he made it. He saw that, with all its swelling pretentiousness, its enormous wealth, the vast numbers of its subjects, nothing but the shell of its old energy and power was left to the Mahomedan dominion, that the vices and the jealousies of autocratic rule had eaten away the heart of it. From the first day of his negotiation with the killedar of Torna he kept his eye steadily fixed on the vast project of Hindu re-conquest, and both as a captain and a statesman, in each of which capacities he was pre-eminently great, his conduct shows an unwavering adherence, not to the exigencies of the passing moment nor to projects of personal ambition, but to certain leading principles of action and administration which he had prescribed to himself as the adequate and necessary means to his grand end. His claim to greatness is, of course, not to be criticised by the ethics of the 19th century. Grant Duff says that 'superstition, cruelty and treachery are not only justly alleged against him, but he always preferred deceit to open force when both were in his power.' The charge of superstition may be passed by, but as regards that of cruelty it is noticeable that Elphinstone—certainly a more discriminating

judge—says that 'during his whole career Shiwaji, though 'he inflicted death and torture to force confessions of 'concealed treasure, was never personally guilty of any 'useless cruelty,' and this statement is assuredly correct. Elphinstone also says of him that 'though a predatory war, 'such as he conducted, must necessarily inflict extensive 'misery, his enemies bear witness to his anxiety to mitigate 'the evils of it by humane regulations, which were strictly 'enforced.' The truth seems to be that, though Shiwaji was ruthless in attaining his object, he was completely free from the detestable passion for gratuitous cruelty, as well as from any disposition to indulge in it as a gratification of temper, and there are few other oriental conquerors, if any, of whom both these things can be said. To contest the accusations of deceit and treachery would be childish, and the best that can be said is that every one of Shiwaji's enemies was just as treacherous as he was, only not so acute, and that the era and the people were unacquainted with the principle of either public or private veracity. The idea that deceit to a foe was morally wrong probably never occurred to a single man on either side. The whole career of Shiwaji was one of struggle and of stress. In his earlier days the resources of the kingdom of Beejapore were such as it might well have appeared madness to contend against, and the whole power of the Mogul emperor was brought to bear on him as soon as he became conspicuous. It was essential to him to push his projects as secretly, as unostentatiously, and in such a way as to attract as little notice as possible; and though no doubt he was utterly unscrupulous in his choice of means, his circumstances were such as would have furnished much excuse even in an age of higher morality. But he ought not, I think, to be condemned for not being in these particulars better than his age, and that he was no worse, a study of Aurangzib's history sufficiently establishes. But if

it may fairly be said of these two princes that either was ready to adopt any means which were the best adapted in his opinion for the attainment of his end, it must be added that in all other respects the character of Shiwaji far transcends that of his mighty foe. Religion was a dominant feature in both, but in Aurangzib it was degraded into the pettiest, narrowest, and most malignant bigotry. His revival of the jizya, or hateful poll-tax on Hindoos, contributed, more perhaps than any single act, to the downfall of the empire, by accentuating the distinction between the ruling race and the vast majority of their subjects. There was no error in policy which he was not ready to commit if to his mean and distorted mental vision a text in the Koran or a falsely revered tradition seemed to justify or demand it, as there was no precept or homily in the same sacred volume which ever held him back from treachery or crime. The gaoler of his father, the assassin of his brothers, the suspicious and dreaded tyrant of his sons, too conscious of faithlessness in himself to have faith in others or to inspire it, his statesmanship mere cunning, his energy the peddling industry of a clerk, opposed to such a national and religious upheaval as is without parallel in the history of India, and which was guided by an intellect as far-reaching and profound as his own was limited and shallow, he was born to be the architect of ruin; and if Shiwaji, as his admirers contend, was an incarnation of divinity specially created for Hindu conquest and dominion, Aurangzib seems equally to have been sent into the world for the express purpose of disintegrating the Mahomedan empire.

In considering the life of Shiwaji, while his genius as a captain is universally recognised, scant justice, as a rule, is done to his constructive and administrative abilities, and to the permanence of his ideas, both of conquest and government; yet the whole history of Maratha power, both in its

acquisitive and its retentive elements, is deducible from the systems established by him, and it would have been well for his successors if they could have emulated his personal disinterestedness and adapted their views of fiscal administration as he did to the good of the state instead of themselves. An administration arranges itself in practice under the heads of revenue collection and the dispensation of justice. The nomenclature of Indian Government exemplifies this idea. The two chief representatives of the state in each district are the collector and the judge. In speaking of Shiwaji's successful system of revenue collection, therefore, something more is meant than intelligent tax-gathering, just as an Indian collector is not quite the same sort of person as Mr. Lilyvick in 'Nicholas Nickleby' who was generally called 'the collector.' Shiwaji learned wisdom in revenue administration from his old guardian Dadaji Konedev. 'As soon as he got permanent possession of any 'territory, every species of military contribution was stopped, 'and all farming of revenue ceased.' The revenues were directly collected by Government servants. Over every two or three villages there was a Karkoon, over each small group a Talookdar, and over each group of Talookas a Mamlutdar. The hereditary district officers, Deshmookhs and Deshpandes, were allowed to exercise no interference. Practically Shiwaji's principles of administration were not unlike those of the British Government except as regards the actual assessment, which, instead of being based on a survey and a classification of soils, was fixed at a certain proportion of the crop. His judicial system was hardly so happy, owing to his predilection for the punchayet, which had always prevailed. But it cannot be wondered at that he adhered to a method of administering justice which was authorised by universal usage and long familiarity, and seeing that there are even at the present day members of

the Indian Civil Service—though hardly perhaps those of whom that service has most reason to be proud—who advocate a reversion to this ancient system, the preference of a Maratha prince who had never been to an university is the less remarkable.

It is superfluous to pursue the course of Maratha history, which may be gleaned from any text-book, at farther length. How the line of low-caste princes was supplanted by its mayors of the palace, the Brahman Peshwas, how the Peshwas extended the Maratha power, and how they came into collision with the British, and their last ruling representative Bajirao was dethroned, how the race of rajas of Satara flickered and went out, are not these things written in the pages of many historians? No lineal descendant of the family of Shiwaji remains, but his indirect representative is Sirdar Rajaram Bhonsla of Satara, in whose possession still remain the waghnuk or tiger claws, the state armour, and the famous sword Bhowani which belonged to the great raja. The last representative of the Peshwas, the adopted son of the last Bajirao, Nana Sahib of Cawnpore, a name associated with sad and terrible memories, has passed into the unknown.

The Marathi language is derived mainly from two sources —the Aryan or Sanskrit and the Turanian or Dravidian. A good many Persian and Arabic words were added during the centuries of Mahomedan rule, but the Sanskrit element so far predominates that about nine-tenths of the Marathi vocables can be traced to Sanskrit words or roots. The modern Marathi is, no doubt, the immediate descendant of Maharashtri, which was spoken about the beginning of the Christian era. The only work now extant in Maharashtri is the Shalivahana or Satavahana Saptashti, composed by King Shalivahana. This king is said to have composed with the help of learned pandits over 400,000 gathas or

verses in the Maharashtri or Prakrit tongue, but of these portentous labours the work mentioned above is the only relic * which we at present possess. It is by no means improbable, however, that careful inquiry might disclose the existence of other productions in the same old tongue, and throw some light on the philological history of the ten dark centuries which follow. There is actually no literary work extant between the time of Shalivahana and that of Mukundraj, who lived about 1200 A.D. The date from which modern Marathi is generally reckoned to have taken its departure is, however, that of Dnyanadev, 1290 A.D., but students of the Dnyaneshwari assert that it had reached a considerable state of development when that work appeared.

The only important literature in Marathi is its poetry. There is no prose literature worthy of the name. The oldest Maratha poet is Mukundraj. The exact date of his birth is not known, but from the following lines, which appear at the close of his Vivek Sindu, he seems to have flourished in the twelfth century after Christ and to have been patronised by the Yadava king Jaitrapal.

नृसिंहाचा वल्लाळ । त्याचा कुमर क्षेत्रपाळ ।
तेणें करविला हा खेळ । ग्रंथरचनेचा ॥

'Ballal (Bhillam) was the son of Nrisinha. His son was 'Jaitrapal, who made me accomplish the task of writing this 'treatise.' Three of Mukundraj's works are extant—the Vivek Sindhu or Ocean of Discrimination; Param Amrita or Great Nectar; and Mulasthambha or Primary Pillar, a

* Cf. the following :—

(From the Saptashti)

Maharashtri.	Marathi.	
सिप्पी	शिंपी	Shell.
रुंदी	रुंद	Broad.
पाडि	पाडी	Calf.

title of Shiwa. Of these the first two are metaphysical, on the principles and doctrines of Vedantism, and the third is a panegyric of Shiwa, the god of destruction.

Next in chronological order come the saintly poets Namdev and Dnyanadev. The former was a tailor by caste, and by some Maratha writers, as well as the English scholars Wilson and Stevenson, he is supposed to be the oldest of the Maratha poets. But this appears to be open to question, judging, not only from his style, but from the dates appended to some of his works. He wrote chiefly in the Abhang metre, and his miscellaneous Abhangs are, like those of Tukaram, very popular with the peasantry. Most of these verses end with the words नामा ह्मणे Nama says, as Tukaram's end with तुका ह्मणे Tuka says. Dnyanadev was a Deshasta Brahman, and lived at the village of Alandi in the Poona district, where his tomb and temple still exist, and attract some 50,000 people annually at a great fair. The great veneration in which he is held is due rather to the miracles he wrought than to his poetical compositions. On one occasion he desired a buffalo to repeat the Vedas. The animal complied, though we know no more what his voice was like than we do in the case of Balaam's ass, or the horses of Achilles. But the fact is attested by the poet Mahipati. On another occasion the poet-saint bestrode a masonry wall, which moved with him at a horse's speed. A remnant of this wall is still shown by the Brahmans of Alandi and worshipped by the pilgrims.

The most celebrated of Dnyanadev's works is his Dnyaneshwari, a commentary on the Bhagwat Gita or Divine Hymn. It is written in the Ovi metre and contains some 10,000 verses. As an explanatory work for the Prakrit reader it is not of much use, as it is so full of obsolete words and phrases that even good Marathi scholars who are acquainted with Sanskrit find it more difficult of compre-

hension than the original Sanskrit. To the archæologian and inquirer after the usages of the Marathas, the book has a high value. At the end of it the poet says that, while King Ramdev of the famous Yadava dynasty was ruling the land of Maharashtra, a vernacular version of the Bhagwat Gita was prepared by Dnyanadev in the year of Shalivahana 1212. Dnyanadev had two brothers named Nivritti and Sopandev, and one sister named Muktabai, all of whom have been deified by the Marathas, the three brothers being regarded as incarnations of the Hindu Trinity, and the sister as an incarnation of the Goddess of Learning.

For three centuries after Dnyanadev, during the Mahomedan occupation, no writer of any note appeared. Towards the end of the sixteenth century there lived at Paithan, the old centre of Maratha glory, an exceedingly remarkable man, remarkable both as a poet and a reformer. Many stories are told of the ridicule and persecution which he underwent at the hands of the Brahmans of Paithan and Benares. On several occasions he was put out of caste, and once his poems were publicly sunk in the river Godaveri But Eknath, son of Suryaji, a Deshasta Brahman, cared for none of these things. He took up his parable against the caste system and other social disabilities which have no sanction in the Shastras, and boldly carried his principles into practice. On one occasion one of his audience, a pious and intelligent Mahar, asked Eknath, while he was urging his usual views, whether he would be an exemplar of the principle that before God a Brahman and a Mahar are equal, by dining at his house. The poet had the courage of his opinions, and next day he went to the house of the man who had questioned him, and there publicly partook of food prepared by the Mahar's wife.

Eknath wrote chiefly in the Ovi metre, and his most popular work is his metrical translation of the Bhagwat,

generally called Eknathi Bhagwat. He died in A.D. 1608. Just about this time were born two of the most distinguished of Maratha poets—one a Wani, the other a Brahman. The first was Tukaram, whose name has been made known to English readers by Sir Alexander Grant and the Rev. Murray Mitchell. The other was Ramdas, the celebrated preceptor of the great Shiwaji. Tukaram was the son of a Wani (Waishya) named Walhoba, and was born at Dehu, a village about 18 miles from Poona. He was a great devotee of the god Vithoba of Pandharpur, and most of his poems are in honour of that deity. He always wrote in the Abhang metre, and his style is simple, sweet, and often full of pathos. He is the most original of all Maratha poets, and his work is remarkable for a high and sustained level of religious exaltation. He was once asked how he managed to overcome sleep so as to pray continuously for nights together. He replied, 'Tie a cord to your shendi (top knot of hair) ' and fasten up the other end'—a painful but practical expedient. Tukaram died in 1649. He is said to have composed more than 8000 Abhangs or 32,000 lines. Ramdas was less fluent and less pathetic, but more shrewd. He appeals to the head rather than the heart, and his works are remarkable for their analytical power and practical wisdom. He wrote both in the Shloka and Ovi metres. His stray verses called 'Admonition to the Mind,' which were written for Shiwaji Maharaja, are almost fit to be ranked with Solomon's proverbs. Shiwaji had the highest reverence for this poet, who was his guru, and whom he invariably consulted before every great undertaking. He is said to have given a striking proof of his respect by making over to Ramdas his whole dominions in free gift, in token of which he adopted as his royal standard the religious flag or Bhugwa Zenda. The story goes that from the fort of Satara Shiwaji saw Ramdas begging in the city below. He went

to his chitnis (head writer), Balaji Abaji, and dictated an order, sealed it with the royal signet, and when Ramdas came to the palace to beg, placed it in his wallet. Ramdas, on opening the paper, found it contained a gift of Shiwaji's whole kingdom. He asked the king what he proposed to do after he was dispossessed of his dominions, to which Shiwaji replied that he would pass his life in the service of his preceptor. 'Very well,' said Ramdas, 'follow me now.' He threw his wallet over the king's shoulder, and ordered him to ask alms. They went from house to house, and when they had collected grain enough, they went to the river, where Ramdas baked two cakes, one of which was eaten by him and one by Shiwaji. He then inquired how Shiwaji liked his new calling, to which the reply was that he was perfectly satisfied with it. Having then inquired whether Shiwaji would obey his commands, and being answered in the affirmative, he bade him go back to his palace and rule his kingdom for his preceptor. The monarch obeyed, and from that day, as a sign that the kingdom belonged to an ascetic, he adopted the ascetic's orange banner. Ramdas died in 1681 at the age of 73. Two years before his death was born at Nazre, near the holy city of Pandharpur, one who may claim to be the most universally popular of all Maratha poets, Shridhur, who was the son of a pious Deshasta Brahman. There is no Maratha poet who equals Shridhur in the acceptance he obtains from all classes. The Brahman may prefer Moropunt, the Kunbi Tukaram, but each will put Shridhur next to him, and each will prefer Shridhur to the poet preferred by the other. In every town and village in the Deccan and Konkan, especially during the rains, the pious Maratha will be found enjoying with his family and friends the recitation of the Pothi of Shridhur, and enjoying it indeed. Except an occasional gentle laugh, or a sigh, or a tear, not a sound disturbs the rapt silence of the audience,

unless when one of those passages of supreme pathos is reached, which affects the whole of the listeners simultaneously with an outburst of emotion which drowns the voice of the reader. Such is the testimony which may now be obtained every day to the power of this great poet, and before such evidence as this criticism must be mute. Shridhur tells us that he wrote especially for the weaker sex. Up to this time the Pandits were the sole repositories of literature and the privileged expounders of the Puranic legends. But when Shridhur, to the intense delight of the people, gave them in their popular Marathi the great stories of the Ramayana and Mahabharat, the monopoly of the Pandit disappeared. At the end of the first canto of his poem 'Rama Vijaya' Shridhur makes a few useful and sensible observations on the value of the Marathi tongue. They offer a good illustration of his pleasing style, the sweetness of his diction, picturesqueness of ideas and images, and multiplicity of metaphor and simile. 'The Pandits,' he says, 'should not neglect this poem because it is written in the 'Prakrit (popular) language. Where the subject treated of 'is the same, whether written in Marathi or Sanskrit, the 'meaning must be the same, as a river which is called on one 'bank the Krishna and on the other the Vena has nevertheless the same water flowing between them. . . . Women 'do not understand Sanskrit, and in this respect their helplessness may be likened to that of a weak person distressed 'with thirst standing at the side of a deep well. Now if 'that person has not a rope and a pot, how will he draw 'water to quench his thirst? Whereas, if he comes to a 'tank, he can do so at once. In the same way, to quench 'the thirst of the weaker sex and lead them into the path 'of salvation, the Almighty has ordained that works should 'be composed in the Prakrit tongue. It is true that the 'original story of Rama, being in Sanskrit, it is better to

'read it in Sanskrit. But the weaker sex cannot master 'that language any more than an elephant can be restrained 'by a rope of lotus fibre. The old language is revered by 'all, but it is so difficult that those only who are fortunate 'enough to be specially gifted can thoroughly master it, and 'if women cannot understand it, how will they be saved? 'The rich dress in costly raiment, while the poor cover their 'bodies with blankets, and thus protect themselves from 'cold and heat. Such is the case of Sanskrit and Prakrit. 'Sanskrit may be compared to the wondrous orb of the 'moon, and Prakrit to its light, for though Pandits praise 'Sanskrit to the skies, they are obliged to expound it in 'the popular vernacular.'

Shridhur's work is not like that of Waman and Moropunt, which was almost wholly translation. Shridhur reproduced rather than translated, though his books are based on the Puranic legends. Tukaram's work is wholly original. He knew no Sanskrit; but though he excels Shridhur in originality, he perhaps does not equal him in expression, and in my judgment Moropunt is distinctly inferior to both, relying, as he does, on artificiality and trickeries of language and rhythm to embellish a much poorer soil. Shridhur has appended dates to his different poems, from which it appears that he composed the Triumph of Rama (राम विजय) and Triumph of Hari (हरि विजय) in A.D. 1703, the Exploits of the Pandavs (पांडव प्रताप) in 1712, and the Wonders of Shiv (शिवलिलामृत) in 1718. He died in 1728 at the age of fifty. He is probably the best writer in the Ovi metre, though popular voice gives the palm to Mukteswar, as the following Arya verse shows:—

श्लोक वामनाचा । अभंग वाणी प्रतिष्ठ तुकयाची ।
ओवी मुक्तेशाची । उत्तम आर्या मयूरपंताची ॥ १ ॥

'The best Shloka is Waman's, the best Abhang Tukaram's,
'The best Ovi Mukhteshwar's, and the best Arya Moropunt's.'

Mukhteshwar and Waman flourished in the 17th and Moropunt in the 18th century. They have all written voluminously, but mostly by way of translation from Bhagwat, Bharat, or Ramayana. Moropunt's writings are held in high esteem. Most of them are in the Arya metre, and he is said to have written more than 100,000 lines. Rumour, however, is fond of lacs. One of his most remarkable poems is the Kekawali (केकावली) or peacock's cry, an original production which shows that he could use an effective pen for other purposes than translation. The greater part of his writings is disfigured by pedantry, and they are so overloaded with pure Sanskrit words that they are less pleasant reading than the simple verse of Tukaram or Shridhur. With the exception of Moropunt, most, though not all, of the more famous Maratha poets are Deshasta Brahmans. He was a Karhada Brahman, and a Puranik or expounder of the legends, and decidedly belonged to the class of pedantic Pandits referred to by Shridhur.

This, of course, accounts for his popularity with the Brahmans. He was born in 1729 and died in 1794.

Waman Pandit was the son of a Deshasta Brahman of Kolhapur. In his earlier days he wrote only in Sanskrit, disdaining the Prakrit as the pedants of those days did. Latterly he composed poems in the despised tongue. They are mostly in the Shloka metre, and almost entirely translations. He was called Waman the Rhymer (यमकया वामन). He died in 1773.

Mukhteshwar was the grandson of the poet-reformer Eknath. He was born at Paithan about 1609, and was a contemporary of Shiwaji. He wrote mostly in the Ovi metre. The best of his works is the Harischandra Akhyana or life of Harischandra.

Amritaraya, Mahipati, and Raghunath Pandit are the remaining conspicuous poets of the 18th century. Amritaraya

has written stray verses in the Katav or Katibandha metre, in which most of the Pawadas or historical ballads of the Marathas are composed. Mahipati wrote several biographical or heroic poems. The most important are the Bhakti Vijaya (भक्ति विजय) and Santa Vijaya (संत विजय). They celebrate the deeds of the Bhaktas or devotees, and Santas or saints, and the stories are very interesting. He also wrote a short life of Tukaram, called Tukaram Charitra (तुकारामचरित्र). Rughunath Pandit has written, as Scott said of Coleridge, 'but too little.' His one poem relates the Swayamwar (स्वयंवर) or marriage by selection of King Nala with Damayanti. The episode is taken from the Sanskrit, but the composition shows great originality and power.

I have mentioned the names of the principal classical poets of the Maharashtra. There are two orders of poems, however, which require special reference. The first is the Lavnis or love-songs. The objection to them generally is that they are both licentious and coarse. The greatest of Lavni writers, Ram Joshi, is however free from this imputation. He was the son of a well-to-do Deshasta Brahman of Sholapur, was born in 1762, and died in 1812 A.D. He has written many hundreds of Lavnis, and they are, with some exceptions, morally unobjectionable. He is said to have travelled from place to place, expounding sacred tales from the Purans and reciting his own verses and those of Moropunt, whom, like other Brahmans, he held in high esteem. He has also written several interesting Padas (पदें) and some descriptive ballads in Lavni style, one of which gives a beautiful and touching account of the great famine of 1803. I have included the original in a collection of Marathi ballads published by myself and Mr. Shaligram in 1891. A translation of another (Holkar's Raid) is in the present volume.

The second of the two special orders of poems just referred

to, viz., the Pawadas or historic ballads, requires more detailed consideration on my part, for it is with these that I have almost exclusively dealt, both in the present volume and the collection of original Marathi ballads just referred to as having been published in 1891, and they introduce to us a class of poets totally distinct in character and attainments from those of which I have endeavoured to give some account above. The true Pawada is not a written poem at all. It is the song or ballad of the wandering bard of the Maharashtra called the Gondhali, which has been handed down by memory from one generation to another. The name of the original author is generally given at the end of each ballad, but it is often impossible to identify him. These Pawadas are, in fact, unwritten bardic poetry, and it has been to me for some years past a pleasurable, but both a toilsome and an expensive task to collect them, and when our collection of some sixty Pawadas was published by Mr. Shaligram and myself, it was a satisfaction to feel assured that so many at all events were rescued from the oblivion into which in the course of time, and that no long time, they would assuredly have fallen. The ballads of the Gondhalis are the only class of poetry which has universal currency among the Marathi peasantry, but in spite of the interest which they excite, modern circumstances are obviously growingly unfavourable to the popularity of the minstrels, and the advantages of civilisation will no doubt, before many years are over, be too much for these products of a time when the steam-engine and the high school were not.

The Gondhalis derive their name from the word Gondhal, a particular dance performed in honour of Amba Bhowani. They call themselves the sons, and are the devotees of Bhowani, and wear round their necks a collar of yellow shells, called the Bhowani cowries. They are by caste

Marathas,* and do not differ greatly in dress and appearance from the ordinary Maratha. Their principal function is to perform the Gondhal in honour of Bhowani at the houses of those who invite them, and to sing songs, religious and historical. They are both bards and priests, and sometimes beg in the name of Bhowani, but as her chosen devotees they occupy a semi-sacred position among the lower orders, much as Brahmans do amongst the higher castes, and as every Brahman has the special religious privilege of demanding alms, so has every Gondhali.

It appears to have been towards the beginning of the 17th century A.D., when the cult of Amba Bhowani † of Tuljapur had spread through the length and breadth of the Maharashtra, and the re-action against Mahomedan despotism was gathering and acquiring force, that the Gondhalis, as the bards of the goddess, began to rise into an unusual degree of popularity among the Marathas. The pulsation of the new national life which began to stir throughout the land was accompanied in the popular belief by the revolt of the Hindu Pantheon against the tyrannous deity of the Moslem. As in the Kali Yuga or iron age the goddesses exercise more power and energy than the gods, so it was the goddess of the Gondhalis, in particular, who was bracing her strength for the struggle, who by dream and vision, in difficulty and danger, was imparting faith and fulfilling hope. Her devotees, therefore, were everywhere eagerly welcomed and enthusiastically listened to, and from time to time her very spirit descended into one or other of them and endued

* It must be borne in mind that Maratha is a caste cognomen as well as a national cognomen. The caste is the same as the Kunbi or cultivator caste. Shiwaji was a Maratha both by caste and race, but the Peshwas, though Marathas by race, were Chitpawan Brahmans by caste.

† Readers of Meadows Taylor's beautiful novel 'Tara' do not need to be told who Amba Bhowani of Tuljapur is.

him with the power of prophecy and other miraculous gifts. Some of these are still exercised by them. For instance, a company of Gondhalis will at the present time offer to discover and announce by the aid of Bhowani the name of any member of any audience which may be assembled around them. The person who wishes to test them will go forward and whisper his name in the ear of the head Gondhali, who will then call a boy to stand before him at a reasonable distance, and will shake or move his own fingers to and fro, repeating 'Jai Amba Bhowani' (Victory to Amba Bhowani). The boy will then repeat the name which was disclosed to the head man. This achievement is spoken of by the Gondhalis as 'Dhak Ghalne' (ढाक घालणें), and does not differ much from the feat of thought-reading.

The peculiar function of the Gondhalis was the service of the goddess, but as her popularity was inseparably connected with the spirit of national independence, the Gondhalis added the character of national balladsingers to that which they had always possessed, and have continued in unbroken succession up to the present day to compose as well as repeat songs in the popular language on topics of public interest. In the 'tamashas' or 'lalitas,' dramatic representations much in favour 200 years ago, the Gondhalis had an important share. Their simple songs of the old mythological heroes of the country—Rama, Mulhari, and Vikram—were much valued, and when the name of a living chief was introduced and the sacred drum (डंका danka) beaten in his praise, the honour was highly esteemed.

The songs of the Gondhalis are of several kinds, but I have here only to do with those which relate to historical events. These are usually sung on demand at or towards the conclusion of an entertainment. The Sudra castes of the Deccan and even the Deshasta Brahmans almost always summon a band of Gondhalis to assist at any important ceremony, such as marriage, the investiture with the sacred

thread, the taking of a vow, and the like. The Gondhalis are luxuriously feasted, and the Gondhal commences in the evening before a large company. The leading Gondhali places a wooden stool in the centre of the apartment, and on it a cloth (bodice cloth चोळखण) with a few handfuls of rice. On the rice is placed a pot full of water, and in the mouth of the pot some mango leaves, on which again is laid a tray full of rice containing also an image (tak टाक) of Bhowani. The owner of the house then worships the image, offering to it sandal paste, red lead, turmeric, flowers, fruit, and money, and burning incense before it. The head Gondhali then takes his station in front of the image, with one of his comrades on his right hand holding a lighted torch. The rest of the Gondhalis stand behind, playing the drum (Sambal संबळ), the lyre (tuntune तुणतुणे), and cymbals (Jhanjh झांझ). The headman worships the torch, offering to it sandal paste and turmeric, and invokes the goddess in the words, 'O Bhowani of Tuljapur! come to the Gondhal' (तुळजापुरचे भवानी गोंधळाला ये), and calls on other deities, whose names he repeats, to be present at the performance. He then sings a song in honour of Bhowani, the invariable preliminary, and afterwards will sing, and if necessary explain, various songs in honour of gods and heroes, and any historical ballads he may know, the latter probably by request. The performance will probably last till daybreak, enchaining the attention throughout, and it is not uncommonly interrupted by a performer becoming inspired with the divine afflatus and bursting forth in a strain of prophecy. Finally, a lamp is waved around the image, and the torch is extinguished in milk or ghee.

The most important domestic ceremony among the Gondhalis is the investiture of a son with the sacred collar, which, as I have said, is composed of cowries, and this ceremony is attended with special solemnities, all connected with the worship of the tutelary goddess Amba Bhowani.

The Gondhalis have not resisted the race tendency to split up into castes. There are Brahman Gondhals, Renukrai Gondhalis, Kuddumrai Gondhalis, Koombhar Gondhalis, and others. They continue popular throughout the Deccan, but it is inevitable that their popularity should be tending towards declension. With the passing away of Maratha power, with the monotony of peace in place of the changing panorama of war and discord, the pabulum which fed their poetic spirit has been removed, and their present productions —for here and there they still produce—are tame and artificial. The most modern ballad which I have come across was a song to the railway. In spite of the interest which the older ballads still command, it is obvious that the occupation of the Gondhalis is departing from them. They will be driven to take up other pursuits, as indeed they are already doing, and with the motive for preserving in their memories the ballads of their fathers, the ballads themselves will be forgotten and lost.

There is a large and rather confusing variety of metres in Marathi poetry, but all come under one or other of two groups, viz., those which depend upon syllabification, and those which depend upon the quantities of vowels. The former are called अक्षरगणवृत्त and are all taken from Sanskrit forms. There are more than 80 varieties, and these are modifications of the eight principal classes, which are

यमाचा	⏑ – –
राधिका	– ⏑ –
तारांप	– – ⏑
नमन	⏑ ⏑ ⏑
भास्कर	– ⏑ ⏑
जनाम	⏑ – ⏑
समरा	⏑ ⏑ –
मानावा	– – –

The latter are called मात्रागणवृत्त and are peculiar to Marathi. The Shloka is a pure Sanskrit derivative, the Arya is partly

derived from Sanskrit, the Ovi, Pada, Saki, Dindi, Abhang, and Pawada are pure Marathi. But there is no blank verse in Marathi as I am told there is in Sanskrit. Rhyme is an essential element in Marathi poetry.

The Pawada is the most irregular of all rhythmic forms. It is nearly allied to the Pada. In the Pada the first line or lines are repeated at the end of each stanza or couplet, under the name of Dhruvapada or chorus. Each distich, ending in two strokes ‖, is divided into two lines, generally of unequal length. The Pawada is much the same, the principal difference in the latter being the frequent alliterations and the excessive jingle of the rhymes. Sometimes, not content with making all the lines in a long stanza rhyme with each other, parts of the lines also are broken into rhyming fragments. In such case the metre is called katibandha, kadaka, or katao. But the versification is often very rude, and the authors not unfrequently slur over or omit words essential both to the syntax and the metre of their verse. The following, which is the first stanza of the original of the ballad on the death of Afzul Khan (No. 1 in this collection), illustrates this. The words which ought to be in, but are omitted from the stanza, are placed in brackets.

माझें नमन आधीं गणा । सकळिक ऐका चित्त देऊन ॥
नमिवेली सारज्ञा (त्या मागून) । न्यारी ज्ञडिताचें भूषण ॥
अग्निदासाचें वचन । नमिला सद्गुरु नारायण ॥
सद्गुरुच्या प्रसादा (नें) । संपूर्ण अंवेचें वरदान ॥
गाइन वज्ञिराचें भांडण । भोंसल्या सरज्ञा दल्भंजन ॥
फौज्ञेवर लोटतां । यशवंत रवंडेश्वरी प्रसन्न ॥
अग्निदास बोले वचन । गाइन राज्ञाचें भांडण ॥
देश इलाईत (ज्ञाण) । कविज्ञ केलें तळकोंकण ॥*

* *v.* 'Marathi Ballads,' Acworth and Shaligram, Bombay, 1891, p. 3, note 1. There will be found two distinct versions of the first stanza, one in the text, one in the note. The translation was made from the latter, which was the earlier obtained.

An excellent sketch of Marathi prosody is contained in Mr. Gunpatrao Ragunath Navalkar's Marathi grammar, to which any one who is anxious to pursue the subject further is referred.

I

THE DEATH OF ABDULKHAN AT THE HANDS OF SHIWAJI MAHARAJA.

[Abdulla Afzul Khan, generally spoken of as Afzul Khan, but called Abdul Khan in the ballad, was a Beejapore noble, and the leader of the first organised effort on the part of the Beejapore monarchy to subdue Shiwaji. The latter corrupted the Khan's Hindu agent Puntojee Gopinath; the Mahomedan army was induced to move as far as Jowli, where it was involved in an inextricable labyrinth of hill and jungle, and Afzul Khan himself, blinded by his own pride and his contempt of his foe, who overwhelmed him with assurances of submission, was seduced to a personal conference below Pertapghur. There he and his attendant were treacherously attacked and killed by Shiwaji himself and Tanaji Maloosre, and the Mahomedan army, left without a leader in a most difficult country, was overwhelmed and either slain or captured by the Mawallees, who had been gathered round it. This occurred in 1659.]

HAIL in all faith to Shiwa,
God over gods supreme!
The iron age grows golden,
His eyes propitious beam,
Whenas the royal ensigns
And stedfast faith afford
Witness to Samb [1] incarnate
In Shiwaji our lord.
Drink from the royal fountain,
Whose living streams o'erflow;
Come, fellows, bathe within it,
And Shiwa's promise know.

Rajghur,[2] the royal castle,
The fort benam'd of gore,
And that stronghold which first the flag
Of victory proudly bore,
Fair Jowlee's crown of palm-leaves,
High soaring into heaven,
And Mundun's clust'ring palaces
The faithful god hath given;
Sonsahila, and Pertapghur,
With Rajghur's hidden gold,
The homes of ancient deities,
Gray forts and bastions old,
All, from a god propitious,
Holds Shiwaji the king;
Hearken, Maratha princes,
His glorious state I sing.

Oh hearken! bards and princes,
Young pillars of the state;
The conqu'ring wiles of Shiwaji,
And wisdom I relate;
How the dark world of mountains,
With every fortress grim
That lowers above their valleys,
Were seiz'd and rul'd by him.
The dying eyes of Chandra[3]
Beheld the lofty wall
Of Jowlee, then of Prabalghur,
And strong Panala fall;
The huge and rocky castle
Which all the whirlwinds sweep;
Ghosala, and the hamlets
By Matunghur that sleep;

The lovely homes that nestle
Above the Konkan green,
Like the sacred lotus swimming
On the water clear and sheen ;
My song shall not forget you,
Nor you, the peasant's home,
Fair lowlands of the Konkan,
To whose twelve harbours[4] come
The laden keels of nations ;
Nor all the Deccan wide,
From Indapur to those old fanes
Where Moslem saints abide ;
Piecemeal by town and hamlet,
They yielded to the king ;
Hearken, Maratha princes,
His glorious state I sing.

When Kallian and Bhewndi
Were given to the sword,
The cry went up to Beejapore,
And Adil Shah its lord.
Fierce was the monarch's anger,
Like flame his summons flew
To the valiant Moslem nobles,
And every good Hindu ;
From all his wide dominions
They throng'd to the durbar ;
But Abdul Khan the mighty
Seiz'd the betel leaf of war.
A sword that gleam'd like lightning,
A stately battle steed,
Were the grateful monarch's guerdon
To the servant of his need.

Seven hundred rocket camels
Their eager riders mount;
The horse were fourteen thousand,
The footmen who could count?
Forth march'd they, but near Torweh [5]
Whene'er the vanguard drew,
Down fell the royal standard
That o'er the cannon flew;
'Alas! an evil omen,'
Said Krishnaji, 'we bring.'
Hearken, Maratha princes,
The raja's state I sing.

To Tooljapore and Punderpore
Slow roll'd the host along;
There to the gods most holy
They wrought most grievous wrong;
Bhowani's sacred image
They levell'd with the dust,
And into Bhiwra's [6] shudd'ring depths
Great Vithoba they thrust.
Then rais'd the Khan a costly shrine,
That men again might pray;
The outrag'd gods receiv'd it,
And his sins were wash'd away.
Slow rolled the Mogul army
Round Pali's ancient shrine,
Then Khundoba put forth his might,
And show'd an awful sign;
The quaking Moslem turn'd them,
And cried a dreadful cry,
And full two leagues in furious rout
Like hunted deer they fly;

Then straight they build a lamp tower,
That night may be as day ;
The god appeas'd receiv'd it,
And their sin was wash'd away.
Towards Awoond's sacred towers
The Moslem host aspire,
There the great goddess Yemai
Display'd a portent dire ;
A holy feast the Khan proclaim'd,
And call'd the priests to pray ;
The goddess check'd her fury,
And his sin was wash'd away.
Slow rolling, widely wasting,
The Mogul army went,
Trouble and woe to Sambhu
When the Khana pitch'd his tent !
At last at Wye he halted,
Which once his sway had known ;
And Krishnaji his letters bore
To the great raja's throne.
The Brahman stood before him ;
'To Shiwaji be health !
'Receive the Khan, and peace be thine,
'And joy, and mighty wealth.'
'What are his gifts ?' the raja said ;
'Were we at peace, I vow,
'With four-and-forty castles strong
'The Khan I would endow ;
'In the fair halls of Jowli
'A stately pageant waits ;
'There will I bide the Khan's approach,
'And greet him at my gates.'
He touch'd the holy Brahman's feet,
Dismissing him, and sent

With him the Mhaldar* Jiwaji
To seek Abdullya's[7] tent.
With aspect blunt he greets him,
As one untaught to fear;
'If not to bow before our gods,
'Why are thy horsemen here?'
No more obeisance paid he,
But turn'd and went his way;
And the furious Khan upstarted,
And bade his host array.
Straight to Rantondi's fortress
His haughty troops he led,
And fourteen days around it
The baffled host was spread.
The raja rous'd his chieftains,
They came from far and near,
With many a Mawul swordsman,
And many a horse and spear;
In council close the leaders
Were gather'd round the king.
Hearken, Maratha princes,
His glorious state I sing.

'Brothers and friends,' quoth Shiwaji,
'No stripling is our foe;
'The holy gods themselves are aw'd
'When Abdul's name they know;
'Say, shall we hail him as a guest,
'Or greet him with our sword?
'The captain of the fort is here,
'Give counsel to your lord.'
'O Shiwba!' the Gaikwar cried,
'The coming feast is sweet;

* Mace-Bearer.

'But sword and spear and helm and mail
'For such a guest are meet.'
The counsel pleas'd; they arm him,
And round his waist they take
The one-edg'd sword that coils and bites[8]
Like the deadly hooded snake;
The two-edg'd glaive by Jiwaji,
The Mhaldar stout, was borne,
And the curv'd steel of the tiger claws
On the raja's hand was worn.
O'er his snowy vest of cotton
His robe imperial flow'd:
He sought his mother's blessing,
She met him on his road;
In a palki[9] Jeeja met him,
And bless'd the goodly king.
Hearken, Maratha princes,
His glorious state I sing.

'If in thy lot, my Shiwba,
'Or woe or bale be writ,
'On me let all the evil fall,
'Towards me I conjure it.'
Thus pray'd his mother Jeeja,
'Be prosperous and brave,
'I give thee here the betel,
'Remember Mahadev.'
She spoke, low bow'd the raja,
And filial reverence paid;
'O mother! would the Dewan's[10] hand
'Could on my head be laid;
'Wide spread my lands and rich my halls,
'But where is he—my sire?'

'Son, meditate thy purpose high,
'And fill thy soul with fire.
'The blood of Sambhaji[11] doth cry,
'His wrong is unredress'd.'
'Mother, I go; but tell my sire,
'I thought of him, and bless'd.'
He fill'd his forts with warriors true,
And till he came agen,
He gave his power to Nettaji,
With full five hundred men;
And with him Umaji was join'd
The royal seat to fill,
While Tookya's eager troops were drawn
Around Rantondi hill.
Then forth to Jowli's audience halls
The prudent raja far'd,
And there, to greet the Khan's approach,
A pageant great prepar'd.
Through every spacious chamber
The silken seats were spread,
Gay with their various borders
Of plumage blue and red;
On carv'd and painted pillars
Rich wreaths of coral hung,
Garlands of pearls and rubies rare
From every cornice swung.
Bright as the glorious Sun in heaven,
Their glow the lamps enhanc'd,
And like the tall and graceful crane,
The fountains leap'd and danc'd.
A canopy of costly cloth
And curtains fine enfold,
Gleaming with many a diamond,
The raja's throne of gold.

Four stalwart Moslem marching
Their monarch's missive bring.
Hearken, Maratha princes,
The raja's state I sing.

For them no courtly greeting,
No prayer, or gift, or bribe ;
Rough, in the first and second courts,
The speech of guard and scribe.
But better far than greeting,
In the third court they found
A troop of lovely dancers
Approach them with a bound.
Rapt were the gazing Moslem,
And Abdul laughed aloud ;
When Shiwaji and Jiwaji
Enter'd amid the crowd.
'First to my guardian Mahadev,
'To Shahji next, my sire,
'Then doth the world's great mother
'My reverence due require ;
'Then to the gallant freemen
'Who guard my forts in mail ;
'And last to thee, Abdullya,
'I bow, and bid thee hail.'
Such was the raja's greeting,
And lofty the reply ;
'Whence did a peasant's son achieve
'To raise these halls so high ?
'And whence the wealth that far outshines
'The courts of Beejapore ?
'Hence to thy wells and gardens,
'The royal rents restore.'

'Abate thy pride,' said Shiwaji,
'The gods alone I fear;
'They rule the fates that govern
'All issues far and near;
'For thee—thy birth and rank I know;'
Thus far the undaunted king.
Hearken, Maratha princes,
His glorious state I sing.

'Back to thy father's oven!
'Back to thy mother's store!
'Whose toothsome sweetmeats oft delight
'The boys of Beejapore
'Shall rajas brook the insult
'Of thee—the baker's son?'
He look'd upon Abdulla,
And knew his work was done.
The Moslem leap'd upon him,
His grasp was fierce and fell,
And how he plied the dagger
The dinted mail might tell.
But Shiwaji the raja
In answer made him feel
The twin sting of the scorpion,[12]
The deadly claws of steel.
His entrails torn and bloody
Gap'd through the horrid wound;
But Abdul was a warrior bold,
And falter'd not nor swoon'd.
He loos'd his girdle deftly,
Uncoil'd the sword below,
And dealt upon the raja's head
A fierce and furious blow.

It cleft the embroider'd turban,
And twisted chains fourteen,
And the raja felt, as steed the spur,
The sword edge sharp and keen.
His blade leap'd out and wrapp'd the Khan,
Like the sacred thread to view,
Between the neck and shoulder
It struck, and clove him through.
He fell, down fell the Moslem,
While stedfast stood the king.
Hearken, Maratha princes,
His glorious state I sing.

Up leap'd the Syud Bundoo,
And rais'd his sword in haste ;
But the wary raja turn'd it,
And cleft him to the waist.
Then forward stepp'd the Brahman,
Seeing the Syud die :
'Turn back, turn back,' cried Shiwaji,
'Turn back, and haste to fly.
'I may not smite a Brahman,
'Lest the curse of God should sound.'
The raja laugh'd, and cast his sword
Down clatt'ring to the ground.
But Jiwaji the Mhaldar
His broad spear rais'd on high,
And, leaping at the Brahman,
He whirl'd, and made it fly ;
It met him in the navel,
The steel of Burhanpore,
Through the backbone it pierc'd him,
He fell and spoke no more ;

Twice did he call on Shiwa,
And then his breath was gone ;
'Forward!' exclaim'd young Kowji,[13]
'The raja's gallant son ;
'Have at the palki-bearers,
'That not a man remain,'
And with his sword he dash'd among
The trembling menial train.
They dropp'd the stately palki,
And wild with wounds they fled ;
While Shiwaji approach'd the Khan,
And straight smote off his head ;
He bore it to Bhowani,
Most like a conqu'ring king.
Hearken, Maratha princes,
His glorious state I sing.

To her, the world's great mother,
In Pertapghur that dwelt,
And bore him through victorious,
He offer'd it and knelt ;
'Receive my gift, O mother,
'This goat[14] of goodly frame ;
'His teeth are as the teeth of men,
'And Abdul is his name.'
Then was the signal given,
The raja's cannon spoke ;
Their twelvefold voice the people heard
And saw the whirling smoke.
Out dash'd the rapid footmen,
With weapons bare to kill,
They follow'd gallant Trimukh,
And crown'd Rantondi hill ;

Down went the Moslem standards,
As on the swordsmen dash,
The elephants that bore them
Fell with an echoing crash.
The Moguls fear'd and turn'd them
And fled with all their force,
And Tookya clos'd and captur'd
Full sixty Arab horse.
Back march'd the host victorious,
Hanmunta at their head,
And to Panala's fortress
By Shiwaji were led ;
There the strong walls were strengthen'd
And arm'd on every side,
And the raging hosts of Beejapore
Victoriously defied.

The noise of war is over,
The songs of victory sound,
The lady Jeeja calls the chiefs,
The loyal chiefs, around ;
They throng the halls of Jowli,
The minstrels sing and play,
And, master of all melodies,
Agrindas[15] gains the day.
With the sweet Kadaka rhythm
A village rich he won,
For ever free from tax or fee
From father unto son ;
Two golden bracelets deck'd him,
Gifts from the goodly king.
Hearken, Maratha princes,
His glorious state I sing.

II

THE BALLAD OF TANAJI MALOOSRE.

[The hill fort of Singhur, some 10 miles from Poona, was held in 1670 by a choice Rajput garrison under Udeban. Shiwaji was very anxious to gain possession of it, and his friend Tanaji Maloosre, one of the most famous of his leaders, offered to surprise it if he was allowed to take 1000 Mawullis and his younger brother Sooryaji, called Sooryaba in the ballad. Three hundred of the Mawullis, together with Tanaji, had gained the interior of the fort before the alarm was given, but a desperate conflict then ensued, in which Tanaji fell, and his men would have retreated if they had not been supported by the reserve under Sooryaji. Though still opposed by very superior numbers, their energy and resolution were too much for the Rajputs, and the fort was taken. Shiwaji was much distressed at Tanaji's death, and is said to have exclaimed, 'The den is taken, but the lion slain. I have gained a fort, but lost Tanaji Maloosre.' Singhur—more correctly Sinhghur—means the hill or fort of the lion.]

In Rajghur[1] rules the raja,
Jeeja in Pertapghur;
In Singhur and Panala's towers
The sovereign Mogul's tyrant powers
Revel and rule secure.
His trustful eyes on Shiwa bent,
To conquest forth the raja went;
O'er the rich Konkan's verdant plain
His sovereign arm was stretched amain;
Before him Ghur and Mhowli fall,
Bhewndi and Kallian recall

His name to Beejapore ;
The Moslem prince sent out his posts,
He summoned all his armed hosts,
And rested in his power.
From Pertapghur's embattled height,
The mother Jeeja's yearning sight
Survey'd the alien eastward land ;
High on the fort she took her stand,
That Monday, ivory comb in hand,
And ardently she gaz'd :
Poona she saw, and Jooner dim,
Jejuri's pass lower'd black and grim,
And o'er them, bath'd in sunshine bright,
Round as an egg, and gleaming white,
The glorious Singhur blaz'd.
She summon'd forth her page at need,
'Puntoji Kaka, hie with speed :
'Within his halls my son may dine,
'But bid him wash his hands in mine.'

The summons Shiwaji obey'd,
In royal garb his form array'd,
And crown'd his brow with rich brocade ;
His coal-back mare he bade them bring,
Harness'd as fits a warrior king ;
The tiger claws he gave command
To fasten on his manly hand ;
His shield was o'er his shoulders flung,
His two-hand falchion by him swung,
With gold the blade was lacquer'd fair—
Shiwaji smote his coal-black mare,
She bounded from the blow,
On Madhea's hill her hoof-beat sounds,
Beyond Birwadi's circling bounds,

And Kolatpore below ;
She passed the Para ghaut like fire,
In Pertapghur he check'd her ire,
And bade his mother know.

Low at her feet the raja bent,
'Why was thy hasty summons sent?'
'Come hither, son and king,' she cries,
'And join me in a cast of dice.'
Little forsooth the raja deem'd
Such sport with her her son beseem'd,
But still his mother's hest obey'd.
'The game is thine, throw first,' he said.
'Not so, my son ; no woman may
'Precede the raja, ev'n in play.'
Three times he cast, alike in all
The dice refused to obey his call.
Three times his mother cast, in each
The obsequious dice obey'd her speech.
'O Jeejabai, the game is thine,'
The raja said, 'the forfeit mine,
'My forts are twenty-seven ;
'Ask and I give, or Nassick fair,
'Or Wadi breathing southern air,
'Or Tung Tikona's double towers,
'Laghughur[2] wrapped in woodland bowers,
'Visapur piercing heaven.'
'None of the forts that call thee lord,
'Desire I, son, but seize thy sword ;
'By Poona in the distance dim,
'Beyond Jejuri black and grim,
'Near Poorundhur I see
'The unconquer'd walls of Singhur shine,
'O gods of power! if they were mine
'Fulfill'd my life would be.'

No foe might daunt the raja's look,
But now his mighty spirit shook;
'Where,' cried he, 'find a mortal man
'To quell the Mogul Udebhan?
'As demon fierce to meet his foe,
'Strong as a god to lay him low!
'What chief towards the tiger's maw
'His hand will dare to thrust for awe?
'O lady, all my forts are thine,
'But ask me not what is not mine.'
'Beware a mother's curse,' she cried,
'Its fire shall scorch thy kingdom wide;
'Give me Singhur.' The raja rose,
And bade her on her couch repose,
Twelve stalwart youths her palki bear,
To Rajghur's royal halls they fare;
The raja fills his throne of state,
And summons all his wise and great;
The lamps are lit, the chieftains proud
About their warrior monarch crowd.
The task announc'd their hearts appals,
And silence quells the crowded halls.

Till midnight thus the hours go round,
And still the hero is not found;
At last the raja spoke:
'Where Pertapghur frowns darkly down,
'There dwells in little Oomrath town
'A chief of fifty, known to fame,
'Tanaji Maloosre his name,
'And him I now invoke.'
A letter, writ with hasty reed,
A courier sprang to bear with speed
To Tanaji. 'And bid him heed,

'Ere the fourth sun we see,
'Twelve thousand Mawullis he bring,
'Arm'd to parade before their king,'
So order'd Shiwaji.

Puntoji's steed outstripp'd the wind,
The towers of Rajghur sank behind ;
By Yetya's wealthy booths he flew,
Beyond the Doni water drew,
And came the Madhea[3] ghaut unto ;
Birwadi, Kolatpore[4] were past,
And little Oomrath reach'd at last,
Two hours before the noon ;
Tanaji subhedar was there,
He pac'd the courtyard large and square,
And hail'd the envoy soon.

Around the envoy might descry
The signs of wedding revelry ;
The joyous rites were just begun
For Rayaba, the chieftain's son ;
Soon as the silver queen of night
Had shone five days with waning light,
Should go the sacred turmeric round,
The next the nuptial tie be bound.
But now the dream of love was fled,
Singhur and war loom'd stern instead,
And many a lofty lord and guest
Gather'd to learn the king's behest.
Tanaji's uncle Shelar came,
With Sooryaba, a dearer name ;
Ramaji,—Yerookankur—knew
To Tanaji allegiance due
In feast or fight they owed ;

'Dada, my page,' the chieftain cried,
'Meesha, my squire, be near my side.'
They came and they abode.
The raja's missive first was read,
Then Shelar spoke, his crafty head
Full eighty years had silvered:
'And what of me, my kinsman? say;
'Rayaba's hope is crush'd to-day,
'How shall I see thee pass away
'To exploits fond and vain?
'Against Singhur full many a foe
'Mine eyes have seen exulting go,
'But ne'er return again.
'They feasted, from the stones they threw
'Beneath the towers, tall mangoes grew;
'But still Singhur their arms defied
'Intact, though they grew old and died.
'Like theirs, alas! thy fate shall be,
'The virgin fort is not for thee,
'Beware Singhur, my Tanaji.'

'Oh, say not so,' the chief replies,
'A Kshatri's fire illumes mine eyes,
'But if it be—mine uncle, hear,
'Shall death's cold hand a Kshatri fear?
'I see my son approach; O thou
'For whom I paid the frequent vow,
'For whom seven times I pled with heav'n,
'Till to my prayers an heir was giv'n,
'We arm for Singhur, but for thee
'I to my prince will bend the knee;
'Seven days thy marriage-rites complete,
'I go to ask them at his feet;

'To Rajghur's royal fort I go,
'There shall my prince his servant know.'

Twelve copies of the royal scroll
Tanaji bade his scribes enroll;
Far off, to valley and to hill,
His runners bore the raja's will;
With stalwart men, twelve thousand all,
Six chiefs obey'd the raja's call;
First of them all Parooché came,
Fifteen fair townships own his name,
Daspati [5] round Mokashi stood,
Small Oomrath's Sirkés, wise and good,
Nandawi's Sawunts, fierce for blood,
The Naiks of Wadghur,
From Silam came its Thakurs strong,
All these in haste to Oomrath throng,
With many a follower.
Rude peasants were they, short and spare,
Rough and unkempt their shaggy hair,
Coarse blankets o'er their heads they wore,
Sickles and bills their waistbands bore,
With clubs in hand, a goodly store,
But other arms were none;
And how before a warrior lord
Send armies wanting spear and sword,
Powder and ball and gun?

Thus did they ask with clamorous cry,
While Tanaji his thoughtful eye
Upon them fix'd, and rous'd his heart
To act a leader's nobler part;
The summons his, their rights he knew,

His chests of cane wide open threw,
Rupees twelve thousand forth he drew ;
He bade each man receive his share,
He bade him trim his beard and hair,
And straight to Rajghur's fortress fare.
The silver granted, forth they went
To march to Rajghur's towers content,
So seem'd it to the chief, but still
They murmur'd to obey his will.
'Rupees I gave,' the chieftain cried.
'Blankets we bought,' they all replied ;
'The hungry shepherds will not cease
'Our wives and homes to vex and fleece,
'Thy silver's glitter scarce we saw,
'It went to fill the usurer's maw.'

Tanaji turn'd and wound his horn,
His palki through the crowd was borne ;
Twelve bearers brought it to his side,
All o'er it mango-boughs[6] were tied ;
To step within one foot he rais'd,
One hand upon the roof he plac'd,
When Rayaba his son drew nigh,
The tear-drop dimm'd his large bright eye ;
'Father, go we to Singhur so?
'Must I my marriage-rite forego?'
'Fear not, my son, thy marriage-rite
'Shall be completed in my sight.
'But first coy Singhur must I wed,
'Then to thy side thy bride be led.'

He bade the bearers march, and straight
They bore him to the village-gate ;

But, as they pass'd, by warning spell,
The boughs of mango droop'd and fell,
They fell upon the chieftain's right,
An omen sore to Shelar's sight;
But Tanaji had cast his lot
On high Singhur, and heeded not.
He reach'd the village march, and there
A jay across him cleft the air;
Then aged Shelar spake:
'O Tanaji, a bode of woe!'
'Uncle, nor omen fear nor foe,
'My raja's golden fates I know,
'Which omens cannot shake.'
His battle-cry he shouted proud,
The thunder of his horns was loud,
Oomrath he left, and Kolatpore
He reach'd and blew his horns before;
Birwadi pass'd, again they sound,
The Madhea ghaut was quickly crown'd,
The Doni water next they cross'd,
The marts of Yetya saw the host,
Once more the horns were heard;
Rajghur's high steep they mounted soon,
They gain'd the royal fort at noon,
And halted for the word.

The rolling cloud of dust was seen
By Jeeja from the tower of green;
'My Shiwaji! behold the foe,
'Let them your cannon's thunder know,
'And strew them dead the fort below.'
The prince his lightning eye
Fix'd on the whirling dust, and knew
His royal standard's orange[7] hue;

'My mother Jeejabai,
'Our subhedar, our Tanaji,
'Has come, and his the troops we see.'
The lady laugh'd, with heart elate,
While Tanaji towards the gate,
With all his men came on ;
He stay'd them there, and down they sate
While he advanc'd alone.

Through four fair halls the chieftain strode,
Bright as the sun in heav'n they glow'd,
Waist high the gorgeous cushions spread,
Rich canopies droop'd o'er his head,
The changing gleams of crystal swung
From golden lamps that round were hung ;
Within the fifth, in royal state,
His guards around, the raja sate.
The subhedar in reverence due
Bent, but his soul to anger flew ;
'What quarrel with my prince had I,
'His oldest, truest, best ally ?
'Why should his messenger appal
'My offspring's marriage festival ?
'The past is past, shall days to come
'Still bring me never peace at home ?'
'I call'd thee not,' the prince replied,
'My mother call'd.' She heard and sigh'd ;
'How shall I face the indignant chief,
'Or words that cause disgrace and grief ?'
She straight withdrew, and woman's art
Call'd to her aid to tame his heart.
In costly gems and robes array'd,
Her guardian goddess Amba pray'd,

'Tanaji's step is at my door,
'Oh, grant me Singhur, I implore.'
On silver platter broad and bright,
Five lamps diffus'd their mellow light;
She pois'd it in her hand, and said,
The while she wav'd it round his head,
'Far from my chief be pain and grief,
'Grant him, ye gods, a rich relief
'From poverty and care;
'May all a kingdom's wealth and power
'Be his who helps me in this hour!'
There paused the subhedar;
As sway'd the lamps his anger fled,
He rais'd the turban from his head,
Gay was it deck'd with golden thread,
He laid it at her feet;
'Thy Tanaji is wise,' said he,
'Ask what thou wilt, I grant it thee,
'Lay on my head thy royal hand,
''Tis thine to issue thy command.'
She gave him answer meet,
'What should I ask, O chieftain sage?
'Give me Singhur to soothe mine age;
'My eldest son is Shiwaji,
'My youngest shall be Tanaji,
'For both my prayer shall weary heav'n
'When Singhur to my hopes is giv'n.'

A son's dear name he heard, and felt
The stubborn heart within him melt;
Back to the camp he took his way,
There Shelar ask'd how pass'd the day,
'Thou saw'st the lady, what was done?'
'My uncle Shelar, she hath won;

'What shall I say? What do I know
'But this—to Singhur I must go?
'Go thou before the lady, say
'Twelve thousand men are come to-day,
'They came for thee, their food prepare,
'Not to tend asses are they there.'
'My son, on thee the load doth rest
'The fort unconquer'd to invest;
'Come, fortify thy limbs with food,
'And tend thy men as chieftain should;
'On Rajghur's slopes their camp prepare,
'And order all the lines with care.'

The ancient warrior wise he knew,
In order'd lines his camp he drew;
His uncle ponder'd deep and long
How to supply the hungry throng;
'Come, subhedar, thy fame is high,
'The Gunjawari stream is nigh,
'Long is the road thou hast to tread,
'Ablution due perform,' he said.
Alone, his feet and hands to lave,
Tanaji sought the cooling wave;
Again towards the camp he bent
His heavy footsteps, ill content;
For every man a stool was set,
A dish of leaves, a cup, a plate,
Food too was there a scant supply,
And loud the army's murmuring cry.

The chief survey'd the unequal dole,
And gathering sorrow vex'd his soul;
His absent son possess'd his thought,
His soldiers' weal he heeded not,

But wisely spoke his uncle old,
And soothed the warrior and controll'd ;
He told the lady's hopes and fears,
He bade recall her eighty years ;
'How shall one aged queen,' he said,
'Supply twelve thousand men with bread?'

Meanwhile from all the hungry crowd
Discordant grew the cries and loud,
While each demands his favourite food,
Bread, pulse, or milk, with clamour rude.
Their discontent the lady knew,
And urgent in her pleadings grew ;
Her guardian power Bhowani pray'd,
And Mangalai,[8] to give her aid ;
Satara's fort and Pertapghur
They left in haste to succour her ;
Wardani came on pinions bright,
Parwati showed her face of light,
And Heav'n's high dames, to furnish food,
In guise of nimble handmaids stood.
They heed not gibes, the meal prepare,
Trebled the soldier's wonted share,
Each feasted full, while all around
Superfluous dainties strew the ground.

Then Tanaji his camp doth leave
His king's last mandate to receive ;
'Prince, for Singhur my face is set,
'My son, my Raya ne'er forget ;
'If fate restores me safe from fight,
'I will fulfil his marriage-rite,
'But if the sword o'ertake me there,
'Be that my prince's grateful care.

'Deny him not his father's fief,
'Or jaghir to assuage his grief;
'Small lands for torch and oil suffice,
'And Donja betel-nut supplies,
'Bestow them, and Maloosrya give
'That Raya and his sons may live.'
He spoke, his stately head he bent,
And forth to Jeeja's tower he went;
Again he laid with reverence meet,
His broider'd turban at her feet;
'I go to Singhur, lady mine,
'Care for my youthful son as thine.'
Her chest of cane she opened wide,
Five costly robes the chest supplied,
Around the chieftain's form she threw
A garb of honour rich and new;
'Return victorious, Tanaji,
'And nobler robes I weave for thee.'
He left, and towards the army strode,
Richly his mantle gleam'd and glow'd;
When Shelar saw the gallant sight,
'Hearken,' quoth he, 'to what is right;
'Twelve thousand men are hither come,
'And all for thee have left their home;
'Till all thy men are seemly clad,
'Thus to bedeck thyself is bad;
'Return the queen her gift until
'She clothe the army, if she will.'

Appall'd the queen the message stern,
'Tanaji subhedar, return;
'Thy men shall all my bounty taste,
'But haste to Singhur, oh, haste!'

She bade them ope the armoury wide,
She bade the men approach her side,
Twelve thousand swords of temper true,
Twelve thousand bucklers forth she drew,
Twelve thousand battle clubs of steel,
Fit to make stalwart foemen reel,
Twelve thousand powder-horns she gave ;
Nor lack'd they lovely things and brave,
Earrings and chains of silver white,
And robes of sacred saffron bright,
Of each twelve thousand ; all receive,
And every warrior walks a chief.

O brother ! hadst thou then survey'd
The pomp the marching army made ;
'Jeeja, my mother, guard my son,'
Cried Tanaji ; the march begun,
Tanaji hail'd the garrison,
He hail'd them as he pass'd the gate,
Borne by twelve men in royal state ;
'Brothers, farewell, return, I go
'To Singhur and the Mogul foe.'
Night round the royal fortress falls,
In distance fade the massive walls ;
Sakhar[9] they reach'd, through Khamgaon wound,
They pass'd by Dera's utmost bound.
At every stage the horns they sound,
But when the foot of Singhur's hill
They reach'd, the noisy horns were still ;
Nought daunted by the toilsome way,
The host below in ambush lay.

Tanaji call'd the leaders round,
And cast a blanket on the ground ;

As challenge to each warrior true,
Thereon a betel leaf[10] he threw:
'Who will ascend to Singhur high
'The fort's best entrance to espy?
'His be a goodly steed to ride,
'A lordly rank, a jaghir wide;
'Twelve villages shall own the name
'Of him, and his undying fame.'
Of all the warriors gather'd there
Not one to lift the leaf would dare,
The loftiest head reluctant bow'd,
The fiercest eye its lids did shroud;
Tanaji only, worthy chief,
Rais'd from the ground the betel leaf,
Within his broider'd turban plac'd,
His brother Sooryaba embrac'd,
'Who knows,' said he, 'how I may fare?
'Be Raya's marriage still thy care.'

His robes and arms the chief laid by,
A patel's simple dress to try;
In guise of rustic gone astray,
He enter'd on the dangerous way;
Through forest dense his pathway lay
Of alwi and bamboo;
With thorn-trees thick the ground was set,
The boughs close twisted groan and fret,
And hide the stars from view;
Dark was the night, and sore distraught
With pain his road the chieftain sought;
At length a lofty rock he found,
And there uncumber'd view'd the ground;
From thence advanc'd he swift and straight,
And issued at the Kallian[11] gate.

Twelve men of tribe unknown, but well
Arm'd, at the gate stood sentinel;
Soon as they saw the approaching chief,
They shouted, 'Slay! a thief, a thief!'
The subhedar replied, 'Ye fear;
'Ay, smite the thief, if one be here;
'But if an honest man I be,
'Who will be first to injure me?
'Bring torches, learn if I be come
'To love your wives or rob your home.'
The oil was brought, the torches burn'd,
His stately form the guard discern'd;
'O blest Narayen, who art thou?
'Thy name and village tell us now.'
'Friends,' said the subhedar, 'in me
'Sakhar's poor patel ye may see:
'To Poona's palace halls I went,
'Near the Mandai, to pay my rent,
'And home returning through the night
'A tiger caus'd me take to flight.
'I come for shelter, let me stay,
'And eat my betel here, I pray.'
'No betel leaf has fed us here,'
The guard replied, 'for many a year.'
A bag beneath his arm the chief
Show'd them, well stor'd with nut and leaf,
For each a luscious meal prepar'd,
With each his drugs and opium shar'd;
The gift dispell'd their doubts and they,
Rude Kolis, for the chief made way.

Tanaji through the gateway came,
And ask'd the guard their naik's name;

Khundoji answer'd, 'I am he,
'The Koli's naik Khundoji.'
'Thy pay?' 'But three rupees, I wot.'
In words the chieftain answer'd not,
But from his neck the chain of gold
He plac'd within the naik's hold;
To Vithoji of silver fair
An anklet gave, an earring rare
To Maloji, and every man
Enrich'd with gifts of all the clan.
'O father patel, may we know
'Why thus on us thy bounties flow?'
The Kolis ask, 'and do not fear
'To tell us what has brought thee here.'
'Whom think ye,' said the chief, 'am I?
'Pledge me your oaths to secrecy.'
Solemn they swore:—'Behold in me
'A chief of Rajah Shiwaji,
'Of fifty men my rank, my name
'Tanaji subhedar, I came
'The strength of Singhur to espy,
'How long its walls, how broad, how high.'

Down sank the Kolis as he spoke,
They heard the raja's name and shook;
'No dog,' they said, 'but we should fear,
'If his, to grant admittance here;
'Take back thy gifts, to Rajghur go,
'The way thou camest thou wilt know.'
'Khundoji naik, mark my word,'
Said Tanaji, 'thine oath I heard;
'Better keep oath than child or wife,
'Dearer thine honour than thy life.'

The naik's heart was deeply wrung
By that persuasive voice and tongue;
'I yield,' he answer'd, 'hearken well,
'All I can tell thee will I tell.
'Six miles between its utmost ends
'The fort its mighty walls extends,
'Those walls, three miles betwixt, enclose
'Full eighteen hundred Pathan foes,
'Foes to thy king, men strong of hand;
'Udebhan[12] Mogul holds command;
'Strong warrior he as god of old,
'Of temper ardent, fierce, and bold;
'A cow, a goat, a load of rice,
'His every meal do not suffice.
'His harem what Hindu has seen?
'But there he treasures wives eighteen;
'His hands can bend with matchless strength
'An iron bar, in weight and length
'Such as the oilmen use, and twist
'Like slender withy round his wrist,
'Or like a necklace can bedeck
'With it his fairest woman's neck.
'His iron strength avails to break
'A square rupee of silver thick;
'His elephant, the Emperor's gift,
'The world's wide orb could swing and lift;
'Sidi Bilal is his Diwan,
'And near in strength to Udebhan.
'Twelve sons the Mogul chief has rear'd,
'Each than himself is greatlier fear'd,
'Each than himself more tall and stout,
'The whole would put a host to rout.
'Yet hearken, chieftain, wouldst thou go
'Wisely to capture Singhur? know,

'Of all the encircling cliffs that one,
'Which faces towards the rising sun,
'Donagiri we call, and there
'An active foot may find a stair.'

'My brethren, thanks, resume your watch,'
Said Tanaji; his feet they catch,
The hero's boldness touch'd their heart,
And to their eyes the tear-drops start;
'Like thee Maharashtra ne'er did hold
'A chief devoted, wise, and bold.'
Thus cried they, and he made reply,
'Fear not, my brothers, for if I
'These mighty walls shall scale and seize,
'You too shall share my victories;
'You of the fort shall rulers be,
'And lords of many a bright rupee;
'To Khundoji my written word
'I give to bind what ye have heard.'

The bargain struck, the chieftain went
To join his soldiers, well content.
Shelar to greet his nephew burn'd,
From doubtful journey safe return'd,
Before him ran, and thus he said,
'To Bahiroba[13] vows I paid,
'Twelve goats I swore to give if thou
'From Singhur safely cam'st as now;
'My oath I must fulfil, I go.'
'My uncle Shelar, say not so;
'Be the fort ours, then I will bring
'Double thine oath for offering.'
'To leave unpaid my vow I fear,
'Fierce is the God.' 'My uncle, hear,

'Regard not Bahiroba, heav'n
'Its mightier gods to us hath giv'n;
'Three times one hundred bend their will
'The raja's waterpots to fill;
'Eternal gold from heaven is his,
'Lord of the Konkan's destinies.'
He gave the word, and every man
March'd to the gate of Kallian,
There halted, while their leader made
His plans the wall to escalade.
No human foot might e'er avail
The smooth and lofty height to scale,
Nathless the crafty chieftain show'd
That Tanaji could find a road.
Coil'd in a box his lizard [14] lies,
Oft tried and prov'd in like emprise;
The docile beast was brought, her head
Was deck'd with pearls and pigments red,
The chief before her bent and pray'd
Now as before to give him aid;
A chain of iron strong was bound
And firmly clamp'd her midst around;
Her master bade her mount, and she
His hest obey'd right dexterously.

Now half the height achiev'd, the beast
Turn'd, and her upward motion ceas'd;
For she the coming fate foresaw,
And grief relax'd her iron claw.
But anger and amaze possess'd,
Soon as she paused, the chieftain's breast,
He shook his sword in frenzy wild,
And loud the shrinking beast revil'd.

'What! seven-and-twenty castles high,
'Have we ascended, thou and I,
'And never hast thou fail'd me yet,
'Dost now thy vigorous past forget?
'I fear not death, a chieftain good
'Of proud and ancient Kshatri blood;
'Mount or I strike; and thou shalt feel
'Thy fate—to furnish forth a meal.'

Her master's words she heard with fright,
Seven bounds she made, and gain'd the height;
Deep fixing there her claws she lay;
'Go, Shelar, go, the rope essay,'
Tanaji bade; his uncle tried,
Swinging his weight from side to side,
Firmly the rope stretch'd o'er his head;
A blanket black the chieftain spread
Before his feet, and on it then
Twelve leaves he cast to try his men;
'Let him who dares yon path of dread,
'Lift up a betel-leaf,' he said:
'If here a single Kshatri stand,
'Be his yon rope to take in hand.'
The challenge fear'd those warriors proud,
Abash'd, aghast, their heads they bow'd;
The subhedar with scorn beheld
His bravest followers' courage quell'd;
'Strip off your arms,' he cried, 'and twist
'A woman's bangles round your wrist.'
Rage stirr'd their hearts like fiery wine,
Shouts Mohita—'The task is mine!'
'Nay, mine,' cries Dhág, 'the task to try!'
'Mine,' Mahadik, Jadhao, Gaikwar cry.

Subhán leaps forward with the rest,
And all the army seems possest;
They call to join their standards straight,
The clamours pierce the massive gate;
High o'er the walls their shoutings roll,
Within the Mogul guard patrol,
They hear the tumult, and they shout
To Khundoji, 'What noise without?'
'Possess yourselves in peace within,'
The naik cried, 'for all the din
'Is but the startled cry of men
'And women round a cattle pen.
'A tiger through the fence has crept,
'And fiercely mid the cows has leapt,
'And cows and keepers o'er and o'er
'Are tumbled in the wild uproar.'

The guard pass'd on, the chieftain then
Chose from his soldiers fifty men;
'Were Shiwaji, my monarch dear,
'Or Ambabai, my goddess, here,
'They should precede me;' thus he said,
Upon the rope his hand he laid,
And foremost climb'd; behind their lord
The fifty came, with each his sword
Gripp'd in his teeth; the falchions bare
Gleam'd, and lit up the dark night air.
The tow'ring wall they mounted slow,
Dim wav'd the jungle far below,
But no man's hand or courage fail,
And soon the topmost stone they scale.

The host below no longer wait
Their leader's task to emulate,

Each rushes on inspir'd by hope
Before the rest to clutch the rope;
Unheeding of its strength, they count
Score upon score at once to mount;
Their ardour Sooryaba leads on,
'Men! follow where your sire has gone.'
But from the ground scarce twenty span
Had climb'd the eager foremost man,
When, with the crowd that following strain,
The rope o'erburden'd snapp'd in twain;
In heaps on heaps the climbers fall,
Nor hope they now to scale the wall.

Above, slow roll the moments past,
The impatient chieftain spoke at last,
'My uncle Shelar, go, I pray,
Why do the army thus delay?'
The anxious veteran sought the brink,
And felt his heart within him sink,
The broken rope swung light in air,
But where the aids they hoped for, where?
Sadly he sought the chieftain's side,
'Alas! the rope is broke,' he cried;
Tanaji felt the hand of death
Lie on his heart and stop his breath;
'No rope of coir alone is riven,
'My thread of life is reft by heaven.
'Uncle, my son!' his eye was dim,
'Tell him I perish'd blessing him.'
'Yet hearken,' Shelar said, 'we are
'But fifty men, my subhedar;
'With Udebhan Sidi Bilal
'And eighteen hundred Pathans tall,

'Strong warriors every man, and she,
'The elephant Chandrawali,
'Are gather'd, how shall fifty men
'Prevail against them? let us then,
'Attempt the backward path, descend
'The way we came,—and there an end.'
'O worthy uncle, true, we may
'By flying save our lives to-day!
'But how shall I, whose worth as foe
'So many captur'd castles know,
'For fear of death my sword lay by?
'Fame will be ours,—I will not fly.'

He rais'd his hands to heaven and pray'd
All goddesses to grant him aid;
Ambabai heard from Pertapghur,
Wardani's heart his pleadings stir,
Satara's Mangalai, and she
Who reigns in Poona, Parwati,
Flew to his aid, and swift before
Bhowani rush'd from Tuljapore.
Around their necks the cowries hung,
Fiercely the skulls about them rung;
They laid their hands on heart and head,
'My Tanaji, be bold,' they said.
He felt the heav'nly impulse rise,
His muscles brace, and fire his eyes,
The past, the future, whelm'd alike
In one fierce wild desire to strike.
'Hearken, my Shelar, where I stand
'The might of fifty nerves my hand;
'And fifty men combin'd a blow
'Must strike at once to lay me low.

'Forward, my men, like stream in spate!'
They follow fast and reach the gate;
Now, through the wicket, hush'd their din,
The cautious chieftain peep'd within:
Arabs, and Moguls, Moslems all,
Upon their guard hold festival;
With drunken glee they toss the dice,
Careless and loud their orgies rise;
Sudden amidst the feast they feel
And hear the edge and clash of steel;
Madly on Alla's name they shout,
While showers of blood spirt all about,
Nor did their foemen cease to slay
Till every Moslem quiet lay.
Near was the day dawn, dark the sky,
When they the second gate drew nigh;
Three hundred Pathans revel there
And shout their war-cries, void of care;
But chang'd their notes, and quav'ring rung,
When Tanaji amidst them sprung.
As tigers quell a herd of deer,
His sword destroy'd them far and near;
The gate was won, and forward sent,
Like shot from gun, the chieftain went;
With all his men the next assail'd,
Destroy'd the gatewards, and prevail'd.
Nine hundred men beneath his sword
Had perish'd of Moslem horde,
Save one,[15] the crier, and he had fled
To call the captain from his bed,
His drunken bed of lust, where he
His wives had gather'd amorously.

There found he stretch'd his careless lord,
About were toss'd his clothes and sword;

'Udebhan Mogul, master mine,
'Forsake thy bed, and spill thy wine;
'Singhur is lost, the fort is ta'en,
'Nine hundred of thy men lie slain;
'The foe we know not, dark the night,
'But men they are of matchless might.'
'And what care I!' the Mogul said,
'What foe shall scare me from my bed?
'Fellow, begone; and for the fray
'The elephant caparison, say;
'With drugs and opium drench her well,
'And fit to face a fiend of hell,
'Then bid them drive her swift and straight
'To battle at the Kallian gate.'
The order learnt, the mighty beast
With fiery drugs her keepers feast,
A howdah huge upon her back
Firmly to bind they are not slack,
A wrestler sturdy wields the goad,
And spurs her on her dangerous road.
Tanaji, where he last had fought,
For rest and food a respite sought,
His frame exhausted ask'd relief,
And crav'd the fragrant betel leaf,
But scarce had tasted, when the sight
Call'd him again to fiercer fight.

'Whose chieftain art thou? tell me true;
'And who my dauntless comrades slew?'
Thus cried the mahout. 'Behold in me,
'A chief of raja Shiwaji,
'My name is Tanaji, and this
'The sword that rul'd their destinies.'

'Brave is thy vaunt,' the Moslem said,
'Methinks a blanket fits thy head,
'A ploughman's blanket, such as wore
'Thy father and his sires of yore.
'Boor, hasten hence, a woodman's axe,
'Or rope, thy hand or waistband lacks;
'Off to the woods, thy fagot bind,
'Across thy shoulders swing behind,
'And seek the Bunya's shop, and there
'Barter for maize, thy usual fare:
'Feed hence thy household, and untie
'That useless falchion from thy thigh.'
Quick to retort the words of scorn
Was Tanaji; 'O fool forlorn,
'O pedler's son, whose task it is
'To hide thy sire's iniquities,
'Haste to the field, and fill with flax,
'Thy only wealth, thine ancient sacks;
'Thence purchase rice for one rupee,
'The chaff and husk thy meal shall be,
'Thine and thy wife's, and she shall grind
'And sell the grain to neighbours kind;
'Lay by thy sword, forsake thy chair,
'Unmeet for thee, who placed thee there?'
'I greet thee, friend,' the wrestler cried,
'The imperial elephant I ride,
'Beware us both.' The chieftain said,
'For Shiwaji I draw my blade;
'Advance, attack, we do not fear.'
'O daughter,' said the wrestler, 'hear;
'Shall he—his mother be defil'd—
'Safely asperse thy mother's child?'

He wav'd his sword; the monster dread
Smote at the chief's unguarded head;

Such was the stroke for weight and strength,
A stone, three spans in depth and length,
Flew shatter'd, but the wary foe
Swift leap'd aside, and 'scaped the blow.
'Again!' the wrestler laugh'd, 'twere well
'To sink him to the sevenfold hell.'
Now at his back the monster tried,
Once more the chieftain slipp'd aside,
The conflict warm'd his gallant blood,
He bounded high in angry mood,
'I come,' he said, 'I come, beware,'
And wav'd his bloody sword in air,
Fix'd on the foe his eye of flame,
And furious to the combat came;
As rais'd the beast her powerful trunk,
Cleaving it through the falchion sunk;
Again it rose, again it fell,
Fresh streams of gore the carnage swell;
The monster rock'd from side to side,
Sank on her knees and groan'd and died.

Hurl'd through the air like stone from sling,
The wrestler's boastful soul took wing;
His fifty men with yell and shout,
Were scatter'd all in headlong rout.
'Strike at their rear!' old Shelar cried,
And smote them flying far and wide.
The crier once more to Udebhan,
Wing'd by his fears, for succour ran:
'Singhur is lost, the fort is ta'en,
'The elephant and wrestler slain,
'Fly to the outworks, master mine,
'Thy couch abandon, spill thy wine.'
'No bandit foe,' the Mogul said,
'Shall scare thy captain from his bed;

'Go to the Peera gate, and call
'My officer Sidi Bilal;
'Bid him to arm, and hurry straight
'To battle at the Kallian gate.'

With speed the mandate to obey,
The trembling crier took his way;
The Sidi found, and in he thrust,
(Nine wives beside him serv'd his lust),
'The foe are here, and scale our wall,
'Forth to the gate and save us all,
'So orders Udebhan,' he said.
Lightly the Sidi left his bed,
His pliant armour round him shook,
In either hand a sword he took,
His hapless wives before him drew,
And each with one fierce stroke he slew;
With blood his brow, a hideous sight,
He dy'd, and foaming rush'd to fight.
'I greet thee, brother, who art thou?
'Thy name, thy monarch, tell us now.'
Answer'd the chief, 'Behold in me
'A chief of raja Shiwaji,
'Tanaji subhedar my name.'
'Son of a clown unknown to fame,'
The Moslem cried, 'a turban place
'About thy neck, and kneel for grace.'
'Nay, thou,' so Tanaji replied,
'Beneath thy shoes thy visage hide;
'And 'twixt the teeth a straw is fit
'For curs who arm but to submit.
'But if thou will'st to fight with words,
'Here let us sheathe our useless swords;

'If not, then let thy words be few,
'And show what Sidi arms can do.'

The Sidi leap'd, and whirl'd his blade,
And round the chief like lightning play'd;
From right to left, from left to right,
Assay'd he every trick of fight;
But Tanaji unmov'd withstood
His efforts, strive he as he would;
'Beware,' said he, 'tis now for thee
'My ardour in attack to see.'
Loud, high, and clear his war-cry rung,
Fast round his head his sword he swung,
Down like a bolt from heav'n it came,
And met the Sidi's shrinking frame.
His helmet first the impact felt,
The blow descended to his belt;
Cleft to the waist he reel'd and fell.
'Alla,' he scream'd and sunk to hell.
Once more to summon Udebhan,
Appall'd and faint, the crier ran;
'Singhur is lost, the fort is ta'en,
'Thy elephant and wrestler slain,
'Thy officer Sidi Bilal,
'Cleft to the waist I saw him fall,
'Dreadful in death—; O master mine,
'Forsake thy wives, and spill thy wine.'
'No bandit foe,' the Mogul said,
'Shall scare thy captain from his bed.
'Fly to my water palace, fly,
'Where hold my sons their revelry,
'Command them arm, and hurry straight
'To battle at the Kallian gate.'

His twelve tall sons the message heard,
And arm'd them at their father's word ;
Their arms,[16] the sacred five, they brac'd,
And o'er their helms the corpsehoods[17] plac'd,
A token true to one and all
They came to conquer or to fall ;
Spear, sword, and dagger seiz'd, and fleet
Rush'd forth the assailing foe to meet.

'We greet thee, brother, who art thou ?
'Thy name, thy monarch, tell us now.'
Answer'd the chief, 'Behold in me
'A chief of raja Shiwaji,
'Tanaji subhedar my name ;
'To storm your fort I hither came ;
'The Mogul's sons are ye, alike
'I greet you ; be it yours to strike.'
At once began the unequal war,
All charge at once the subhedar ;
Unmov'd he stood, and on his mail
The sword and javelin play like hail.
'O Ambabai !' he prayed, 'be thou
'Close by my side and aid me now.'
Full of the goddess, like a god
Tow'ring and high the sand he trod ;
To left and right, to right and left,
Through every foe his falchion cleft ;
All felt the edge, and every man
Died of the sons of Udebhan.

When all the twelve tall sons lay dead,
To warn their sire the crier fled ;
'Singhur is lost, the fort is ta'en,
'Thy sons are mingled with the slain,

'The stalwart slain who died before,
'Nine hundred lying in their gore,
'Sidi Bilal, thy wrestler strong,
'Thy elephant, all stretch'd along,
'All slain for thee, O master mine,
'And thou liest drench'd in lust and wine!'

The message thrill'd the father's heart,
He leap'd from couch with sudden start;
He bid the crier return, and tell
To Tanaji that all was well,
That Udebhan had fled away
To Poona, and resign'd the fray;
That victory was his, and high
The raja's standard he might fly.
The soothing words of falsehood sent,
To view his foe the Mogul went;
He sought the spacious magazine
Which near the Peera gate is seen:
From thence loose cotton, many a bale,
And oil in many a cask and pail,
At his command the soldiers drew,
The oil upon the cotton threw,
And fir'd the mass; the blazing light
Made all the scene of battle bright.
With careful eye did Udebhan
Count o'er his foemen, man by man,
And when but fifty men he found,
His fingers tingled, on the ground
He stamp'd for ire; 'The foe I see
'Are but a bite for such as me.'

Exulting, to his armoury gone,
His garb of war he bade put on

A cuirass many a ser in weight,
Strong greaves and helm endued he straight;
Around his helm brocade he wreath'd;
Body and legs in silk he sheath'd;
With hooks of steel he arm'd his hand,
And issued forth his last command,
The fierce command which bid his wives,
Hapless and weak, lay down their lives;
Before him each in order drew,
Each with a stroke their tyrant slew;
A breeding heifer next he made
The victim of his impious blade,
And sought the Peera mosque to burn
Incense to buy his safe return.
His prayers unholy all complete,
With mace and sword he march'd to meet
The foe, ordain'd by adverse fate,
Who waited at the Kallian gate.
Nine hundred men—of all his band
They that surviv'd—behind him stand.
'I greet thee, brother, who art thou?
'Thy name, thy monarch tell me now.'
Answer'd the chief, 'Behold in me
'A chief of raja Shiwaji,
'Tanaji subhedar my name.'
'Good friend,' said Udebhan, 'I came
'No strife to urge, for well I see
'Thy king a warrior chose in thee,
'Worthy to grace a prince's side,
'Worthy to be an emperor's pride.
'Would that in thee a brother dear
'I now might find to govern here!
'None else should be my wazir, thou
'A nobler rank shouldst have than now,

'Captain of this imperial hold
'Thy coffers should run o'er with gold,
'And all the joys of life be thine,
'If, left thy raja, thou wert mine.'
'Nay, Mogul small and mean of fame,
'Change rather thou thy master's name,'
Said Tanaji, 'Singhur resign,
'And in my train as soldier shine,
'Visit with me the raja's court,
'And hope to rule the royal fort.'

He saw the Mogul's anger rise,
Like lightning gleam his fire-red eyes,
And pray'd his goddess, 'Amba, hear,
'Desert not now thy servant dear.'
Swift as she rush'd his foe to awe,
The slaughter'd cow the goddess saw,
She saw its life-blood gushing wide,
And turn'd her shudd'ring steps aside,
She turn'd aside, and came not near,
Then first his spirit learn'd to fear;
Headlong he rush'd and wildly leapt,
The Mogul stern his posture kept
Unmov'd, unwounded by the attack,
Till Tanaji at last fell back,
Spent, and exclaiming, 'Udebhan,
''Tis thine to try what Mogul can;
'Uncle, farewell; my fate I see,
'The hour supreme hath come for me;
'Remember Raya's marriage, give
'The king my greeting, may he live,
'Long may he live when I am gone,
'Victorious; Udebhan, come on.'

The Mogul came with furious leap,
Vast was his falchion's hissing sweep,
The fumes of wine within his veins
Blaz'd like a fire on sun-scorch'd plains;
With giant force his sword descended,
Tanaji and his wars were ended!
Through helm and head the weapon sped,
Alas! and laid the hero dead;
His turban cleft through every fold,
His gorgeous turban lac'd with gold,
Useless defence, behind him roll'd.
With sorrow melted, chill'd with fright,
His folk bewail'd the dreadful sight;
'Master! who now shall save thy men
'Deserted in the tiger's den?'
Shelar upon his aged knee
The corpse supports, and scorns to flee.
But Udebhan exulting cries,
'Seize, Pathans, seize and sacrifice
'These feeble folk, your vengeance sate,
'And offer to the Kallian gate.'
Once more he rais'd his sword, while they
Calling on God in anguish lay;
Glorying the Mogul turn'd away.
But ev'n in death, to meet his foes
The subhedar's brave spirit rose;
It rose, it stirr'd, with sudden thrill
It fir'd old Shelar's feeble will,
It brac'd with youth his ancient hand,
He seized the hero's fallen brand,
'Turn back,' he cried, 'and face again
'The sword of him whom thou hast slain;
'Not all Maharashtra with him died.'
The Mogul turn'd him in his pride;

But scarce he heard the challenge stern,
Scarcely his eyes did backward turn,
When Shelar, with a single blow,
Stretch'd him above his noble foe;
The attack, the stroke, like lightning past,
One cry to Alla was his last.

Each captain thus was reft of life,
Their followers clos'd in vengeful strife;
Pathans nine hundred, soldiers good,
Marathas fifty, peasants rude,
Alone their leader Shelar knew
The sword to wield, and they were few.
Soon of their number half lay dead,
'Come, seize the rest,' the Pathans said,
'Seize, and revenge our captain's fate
'By slaying at the Kallian gate.'
The haughty summons Amba heard,
And felt with woe her bosom stirr'd;
Like starven corpse her form she dress'd,
About was wound a tawny vest,
The cowries rattled on her breast,
And thus, the battle to restore,
She call'd to aid her heavenly lore,
Flew to the outer gate and bade
It ope, the stubborn wood obey'd;
She call'd the troops outside to aid;
Thousands at once, with mighty din,
Shouting their war-cry pour within.

First Sooryaba his uncle hail'd.
'Shelar, hath Tanaji prevail'd?
'Where is my brother?' Shelar thought,
'Shall I bring all our strife to nought?

'Shall I declare that he is dead,
'He of the host the soul and head?
'Their souls will perish with him; nay,
'Deceit will be the better way.
'Our chief within the upper court,'
He cried, 'hath seiz'd the inner fort;
'But hasten, at the Kallian gate
'Your arms nine hundred Pathans wait,
'Go forth and slay, and then pursue
'The path your chief hath op'd for you.'

They heard, their war-cry thunder'd loud,
They charg'd in one resistless crowd;
O'erwhelm'd, confus'd, and swept along
Like driftwood when a stream is strong,
The Pathans fell, were crush'd, and died,
And lost beneath the rushing tide.
On pour the host in conquering might,
Tear down the Mogul's ensign white,
And o'er the fortress of their foes,
Their monarch's orange standard rose.
And now the cannons' thunder loud
Peal'd o'er the plain the conquest proud;
Five times they spoke in flame and smoke,
And Rajghur's distant towers awoke;
'Singhur is ours,' proclaim'd the king,
And bid ten guns his answer ring.

Meanwhile old Shelar led the way
(No more would Sooryaba delay)
Where low on earth the hero lay.
From Sooryaba the sword he took;
And bade him on his brother look:

He raised the scarf all stain'd with red
Which hid from sight the gallant dead,
He look'd upon the face, and high
Rose on the air his wailing cry:
'O brother dear! what father now
'Can bless thy Raya's marriage-vow?'
Next from the gate the Kolis brave,
Who to the chief admittance gave,
Approach'd and cried, 'Who now will pay
'The price for which we gave him way?'
'Brothers,' said Sooryaba, 'fear not,
'Nor deem his death has chang'd your lot;
'I will redeem his vows; I go,
'And Shiwaji your worth shall know;
'And he shall grant before I sleep,
'This fort to you to guard and keep.'

Spices were brought and perfumes fair,
The corpse, embalm'd with love and care,
Rais'd in a palki from the ground,
With silken scarves was swath'd and bound,
Twelve soldiers strong the palki bore,
Trumpet and cymbal peal'd before,
Behind them came the gallant host
Who fought beneath the leader lost;
With songs of triumph and of grief,
They march'd behind their silent chief,
And, mingling still the trump and drum,
To Rajghur's royal towers they come;
A moment halt the fort below,
Tanaji's signal horns they blow,
Then mount the steep, and pass the gate,
And enter with their mournful freight.

From far the mother Jeeja spied
The chief within his palki ride,
Nor rise, descend, or leave his seat,
The raja and the court to greet.
Should thus ev'n such a chief neglect
To pay his monarch due respect?
She came with speed, the dead man saw,
And sank o'erpower'd with grief and awe;
The scarf remov'd, she saw his face,
'No worthier chief of Kshatri race,'
'Twas thus she wail'd, 'e'er drew a sword
'Before the armies of his lord.
'Shiwaji, son and king, to-day
'Thy goodliest limb is lopp'd away.'
Nor less the monarch to his chief
The tribute paid of royal grief.

He bade take up the mournful load,
With cover'd head he took the road:
With sound of trumpet and of drum,
To Oomrath's lowly walls they come.
His chieftain's children first to greet
The sorrowing monarch turn'd his feet.
The music Raya heard with glee,
'My father has return'd,' said he;
'He comes my marriage to complete;'
With speed he ran his sire to greet,
And saw his sire; 'Alas! alas!
'How shall my marriage come to pass?
'Who now, O lord belov'd, shall call
'The minstrels to the marriage hall?'
Silent no more the king might rest,
The child he gather'd to his breast;

'Oh cease thy tears, my son,' said he,
'A father thou shalt find in me.'
For twelve slow days the rites resound
Of mourning through the country round,
Then, duly all fulfill'd, they cease,
And sleeps the mighty dead in peace.

But yet in Oomrath rested still,
His chief's last wishes to fulfil,
The grateful prince; with anxious care,
He sought a noble maid and fair,
For Raya; Darkar's line supplied
A damsel meet to be his bride.
Deck'd o'er with mango boughs, a hall
Rose richly for the festival;
There, when the marriage-rites were done,
The monarch call'd his chieftain's son,
And, seated there his throne before,
Gave all his sire had ask'd and more.
He granted all his father's fief,
Of fifty men he made him chief,
Donaj he gave for torch and oil,
A jaghir rich in trees and soil
For betel leaf, and gave beside
Maloosrya to feed his bride.

The raja summon'd then his train,
With Rayaba return'd again
To Rajghur; on his throne of state
Most like a conquering prince he sate,
And gave command, 'My page, array
'Thy steed, to Poona haste away,
'There, near the Mandai, seek and bring
'Tulshidas[18] Shahir to the king.'

Puntoji swift his steed array'd,
With speed the royal hest obey'd,
Tulshidas Shahir found, and brought
The poet to his prince's court;
There to his tambourine and lyre
Sweetly he sang and did not tire;
In Katibhanda rhythm pure,
The hero's feats shall long endure;
With tears the raja heard the bard,
And dower'd him with a rich reward.

And ye, Marathas brave! give ear,
Tanaji's exploits crowd to hear.
Where from your whole dominion wide
Shall such another be supplied?
O'er seven and twenty castles high
His sword did wave victoriously.
The iron years are backward roll'd,
His fame restores the age of gold;
Whene'er this song ye sing and hear,
Sins are forgiv'n, and heaven is near.

III

SONPUT PANIPUT

[The Raja Shao was the son of Sambhajee Raja and grandson of Shiwaji Raja. His real name was Shiwaji, but Aurangzib, in whose court his boyhood was passed after his father's execution, gave him the nickname of Sahoo, which, changing it to Shao, he retained for the rest of his life. He was written of by the English as 'the Sow Roger.' His reign was a long one, and saw the rise of the Peshwas to practical supremacy. He died in 1750, Balaji Bajee Rao being then Peshwa. The battle of Paniput was fought in 1761. The Marathas were commanded by the Peshwa's first cousin, Sadashivrao Chimnaji, commonly called the Bhao Sahib, or the Bhao. This, like Bala Sahib, Nana Sahib, Dada Sahib, is a respectful diminutive. They were opposed to the Afghans under their king, Ahmed Shah Abdallee, who was invading Northern India for the third time. The principal Maratha leaders under the Bhao Sahib were Viswasrao, the Peshwa's son; Shumsher Bahadur, the Peshwa's half-brother; Bulwantrao Gunput Mendlee; Damaji Gaikwar; Jankoji Sindia; and Mulharrao Holkar. The Marathas were, after a long and doubtful struggle, defeated with immense loss. Viswasrao was killed in the battle. Jankoji Sindia was wounded and taken, and murdered in cold blood by the conqueror. Shumsher Bahadur was also wounded, but escaped, only to be massacred by the peasantry. Damaji Gaikwar and Mulharrao Holkar were more fortunate, and escaped altogether. Bulwantrao was killed in a skirmish before the battle. The fate of the Bhao Sahib is not accurately known, but no doubt he fell in the battle. The defeat was the most terrible one which the Marathas ever suffered as an united nation, but the Afghan losses were also immense, and after the battle Ahmed Shah Abdallee retired to Afghanistan and never again interfered in Indian affairs.]

THE Raja Shao was weary,
He sought his home of rest,
He call'd his chiefs around him,
And spoke his last behest;

To guard the realm he charg'd them,
Eight statesmen grave they were ;
The Peshwa stood among them,
And the noble Bhao was there.
He straightly charg'd the Peshwa,
And gave his royal seal,
'Nana, with thee the power shall be
'To watch the common weal.'
Yet all the land was trembling,
And never a foe was seen ;
So far had flown Maratha wings
O'er cities and o'er thrones of kings,
So deep the fear and keen.
O lord of princely presence!
Than our own life more dear,
Why hast thou left us? tell us why ;
Return, and bid thine anger fly,
O noble Bhao! appear.

Like the noble Bhao[1] no hero
The ancient minstrels told ;
He broke the throne of silver,
Of diamonds and of gold.
And Viswasrao, he lodg'd him
Within the Mogul hall ;
The gods impell'd him onward,
And fate is lord of all.
The mints pour'd forth their mohurs,
Rupees in lacs appear'd,
Each man receiv'd a portion,
And all the troops were cheer'd,
O lord of princely presence!
Than our own life more dear,
Why hast thou left us? tell us why ;

Return, and bid thine anger fly,
O noble Bhao! appear.

The dying Shao foreheard it,
A mighty sound of fear,
Twelve years had reign'd the Peshwa,
And the coming woe was near.
Whence was the witch that brought it?
May the curse of God on high
Wither the hand and blast the land
That made Marathas fly.
Far, wide o'er all the Deccan
Went out the summons loud,
The yeomen and the nobles
Came gath'ring in a crowd;
The Bhao gave forth his orders,
The kettledrums were strook,
The host roll'd on to Delhi,
And the Mogul throne they shook.
The Bhao drove in a warpost,[2]
He drove it strong and deep,
And many a bloody field he fought,
And many a deed of fame he wrought,
Oh! be those fields as sacred thought
As Kashi, ye that weep!
O lord of princely presence!
Than our own life more dear,
Why hast thou left us? tell us why;
Return, and bid thine anger fly,
O noble Bhao! appear.

Around the walls of Delhi
The battle first was join'd,
The archers went out foremost,
Mail'd warriors march'd behind.

The hostile troops were scatter'd
Like leaves the wind has spread,
The conquerors seiz'd on Kootub
And lopp'd his tow'ring head.
Men fear'd the Deccan hero,
And saw his fame increase;
The Abdallee heard and trembled,
And humbly begg'd for peace.
O lord of princely presence!
Than our own life more dear,
Why hast thou left us? tell us why;
Return, and bid thine anger fly,
O noble Bhao! appear.

For peace the weary foemen,
For peace their leader pray'd;
Two crores of coined silver
Before the Bhao were laid.
But ruin dogg'd his footsteps,
His ears were deaf to prayer;
'Slaves,' said he, 'haste to fly my war,
'Wait my approach in Kandahar,
'And bring your off'rings there.'
On the fertile banks of Jumna
He drove the warpost in,
Then did the deadly skirmish,
And duel fierce begin.
Where fought the mighty Pandus,
In ages long gone by,
The camp was pitch'd, and warriors vow'd,
With brandish'd sword and gesture proud,
To slay the foe or die.
O lord of princely presence!

Than our own life more dear,
Why hast thou left us? tell us why;
Return, and bid thine anger fly,
O noble Bhao! appear.

To guard the camp from danger,
And vex the frighten'd foe,
Wide round the swarming squadrons
The circling earthworks go.
Deep was the moat around them,
And keen the eyes that scann'd
The slave-girl's[3] murd'rous progeny
Marauding through the land.
He sprang as springs the lion,
But like the deer he flew,
And twice the pangs of terror
The baffled Gilcha knew.
O lord of princely presence!
Than our own life more dear,
Why hast thou left us? tell us why;
Return, and bid thine anger fly,
O noble Bhao! appear.

The Bhao was pressed by famine,
The hour extreme was nigh,
The soldiers crowded round him,
And rais'd their voice on high;
He ordered all things duly,
And nam'd the fatal day,
And fourscore thousand warriors
With joy his hest obey.
They shout his name with rapture,
And strike on all their drums
The rattling roll that stirs the soul
When the Bhugwa Zenda comes.[4]

O lord of princely presence!
Than our own life more dear,
Why hast thou left us? tell us why;
Return, and bid thine anger fly,
O noble Bhao! appear.

Fierce was the hero's onset,
Then brave Bundela[5] fell;
Against the Bhao with all his force
The Gilcha urged two myriad horse,
They used their weapons well.
Bulwunt no more could bear the sight,
He burst into the thickest fight,
And battled hilt to hilt,
Unmark'd his leader's voice of might,
His gallant blood was spilt.
O lord of princely presence!
Than our own life more dear,
Why hast thou left us? tell us why;
Return, and bid thine anger fly,
O noble Bhao! appear.

But Viswasrao the hero,
Young hope of all the state,
His valour and his fortune,
Ah! how shall bard relate?
The whistling shot rain round him,
Whole armies fall in front,
Vainly the Gilcha leaders
In the midmost bear the brunt,
Vainly the Bhao would turn him
From the path of fear and pride,
The fatal bullet struck him,
'Har! Har!'[6] he call'd and died.

O lord of princely presence!
Than our own life more dear,
Why hast thou left us? tell us why;
Return, and bid thine anger fly,
O noble Bhao! appear.

Now mounted gallant Jankoji,
The chief of Sindia's name,
To save Maratha honour
With fiery speed he came;
Loudly the Bhao besought him,
And his high heart was stirr'd,
As pealing o'er the tumult
His leader's voice he heard;
But the Gilcha's steel wax'd stronger
With unrelenting sway,
And the heads of many a captain
To their king they bore away.
O lord of princely presence!
Than our own life more dear,
Why hast thou left us? tell us why;
Return, and bid thine anger fly,
O noble Bhao! appear.

Brave Sonji then and Manji,
In glittering armour bright,
Spurr'd on their foaming chargers
Amid the thickest fight;
With Damaji the Gaikwar,
And Holkar strong of hand,
Round the corpse of fallen Tukoji
Like walls of fire they stand.
But the furious foe o'erflow'd them,
The trumpets wail retreat,

Press'd on all sides, a nation reels,
The event the Almighty will reveals,
But who foretold defeat?
O lord of princely presence!
Than our own life more dear,
Why hast thou left us? tell us why;
Return, and bid thine anger fly,
O noble Bhao! appear.

The Peshwa's glorious progeny,
A gem of lustre rare,
Brave Shumsher[7] hears the drumbeat,
And does what man may dare.
With broadsword and with buckler,
He bears a squadron's force,
Rules the affray, and holds at bay
Full thirty Gilcha horse.
But his noble blood was streaming
From many a grievous wound,
Or e'er he reach'd the Bhao and sank
In death upon the ground.
O lord of princely presence!
Than our own life more dear,
Why hast thou left us? tell us why;
Return, and bid thine anger fly,
O noble Bhao! appear.

Full fiercely rag'd the battle,
Full fiercely and full long;
To strike, be struck, to kill, and die,
The desperate soldiers throng;
But the Gilchas wax'd more furious,
Theirs was the bloody day,
And the great host of Marathas
In rout was swept away;

Or singly or in squadrons,
They turn, and fight, and fly;
The palkis crowd, but the leader proud
On the field was left to die.
O lord of princely presence!
Than our own life more dear,
Why hast thou left us? tell us why;
Return, and bid thine anger fly,
O noble Bhao! appear.

'Friends,' said the sad survivors,
And hush'd their tones in awe,
'The noble Bhao and Jankoji
'Is any man that saw?
'How far'd it with our leader?
'The Nana[8] who shall tell
'Whether he lives, or whether
'On the ridge of fight he fell?
'We saw him erst surrounded
'By thirsty swords and keen,
'And none was near to aid him,
'But more we have not seen.'
O lord of princely presence!
Than our own life more dear,
Why hast thou left us? tell us why;
Return, and bid thine anger fly,
O noble Bhao! appear.

They left him not who lov'd him,
But fighting round him died;
While traitors, with their spoils secure,
Towards the Deccan ride.
May the curse of God o'ertake them,
With ruin, pain, and woe,

They filch'd from us the victory,
And gave it to the foe.
The hearts of all the Deccan
Turn'd where the warrior slept ;
'Mid young and old, and rich and poor,
Was not an eye but wept.
O lord of princely presence !
Than our own life more dear,
Why hast thou left us? tell us why ;
Return, and bid thine anger fly,
O noble Bhao ! appear.

The tidings reach'd the Nana,
He read the fatal scroll,
And fell as one death-stricken,
For anguish touch'd his soul.
'The hand of God is o'er us,
'Ruin assails the state !'
Loud wept the lady Gopika,
And mourn'd the awful fate.
The Nana turn'd him homeward,
From Oojein's shelter sweet,
And through his mourning squadrons
The kettles sound retreat.
O lord of princely presence !
Than our own life more dear.
Why hast thou left us? tell us why ;
Return, and bid thine anger fly,
O noble Bhao ! appear.

For the hero who had fall'n
The mourning days were kept,
The beasts of earth, the birds of heav'n,
All things created wept.

The parrot hush'd his joy-note,
The maina's song was marr'd,
And the ring-dove's mournful melody
Drew sorrow from the bard.
Where is the beauteous warrior
Who master'd every heart?
An evil dream assail'd him,
And all our joys depart.
The riches of the wealthy
Were melted into air;
The shelves of the purveyors,
The bankers' bags were bare;
The palace reel'd in tumult,
And Brahmans saw appear
On the brow of mighty Parwati
The dew of wrath and fear.
O lord of princely presence!
Than our own life more dear,
Why hast thou left us? tell us why;
Return, and bid thine anger fly,
O noble Bhao! appear.

Where art thou, O our hero?
The darling of the state,
In whom the holy gods combin'd
All fortunes pure and great.
We cast the world behind us,
And seek the ascetic's cave,
For all its joys and pleasures
We choose a living grave,
If thou indeed hast left us;[9]
But if again we meet,
With what a rapturous heartburst
Thy presence shall we greet!

'Our conqu'ring powers are broken,'
  Sings Mahdoo, bard sublime.
'O generous soul! I truly wait,'
Says Rama Satwa, 'at thy gate,
  'To learn thy lofty rhyme.'
O lord of princely presence
  Than our own life more dear,
Why hast thou left us? tell us why;
Return, and bid thine anger fly
  O noble Bhao! appear.

IV

THE BALLAD OF RAMABYE, WIFE OF MADHOORAO THE ELDER

[Ramabye, the wife of Madhoorao I., generally known as Thorela or the elder Madhoorao, immolated herself on her husband's funeral pyre. The latter died of consumption at Theoor, 13 miles from Poona, in November 1771.]

HEARKEN! I sing the witness
  Which former times afford,
How cherish'd patient Ramabye
  Her god-descended lord,
And how the righteous Nana[1]
  The laws of heav'n ador'd.

Hearken! the gods had bless'd him
  With gems beyond compare,
Viswasrao, Madhoorao, and he—
Narayenrao—made up the three,
Who dree'd a direful destiny,
  A cluster rich and rare;
And 'twixt the younger two so strong
The love, their story might belong
To those two lords of ancient song,
  Whom the same mother bare.
How was the double emerald spilt?
I know not, nor can mortal wit
  The secret dark declare.
Madhoorao on his throne of state,
A peaceful prince, in Poona sate;

No armies muster'd, but his hand
Unsworded stretched o'er all the land.
The foeman shrank before his fame,
Vast tribute to his treasury came ;
Surat, and Bassein's lofty wall
Beneath his lordly mandate fall ;
Kolaba seiz'd, before him flee
The banners of the Portuguee ;
The Angrias' sails were torn, and they,
The captive chiefs, in Poona lay ;
Madhoorao's fame transcends the stars,
They vainly gnaw their prison-bars.
Hearken ! I sing the witness
  Which former times afford,
How cherish'd patient Ramabye
  Her god-descended lord,
And how the righteous Nana
  The laws of heav'n ador'd.

Deep as the ocean's depth profound,
Which shipman's plummet may not sound,
The prince's judgment pass'd the ken,
His deeds the power, of mortal men :
Skill'd leader of his horse was he ;
He march'd for Theoor merrily,
The rattling kettles clang'd with glee
  Behind him and before.
In howdah ceil'd with royal state,
And fram'd with glittering glass, he sate ;
  An elephant upbore
The stately load, and stepp'd along
Majestic through the armed throng,
While sounded shrill, and loud, and long,
  The trumpet's deaf'ning roar.

Hearken! I sing the witness
Which former times afford,
How cherish'd patient Ramabye
Her god-descended lord,
And how the righteous Nana
The laws of heav'n ador'd.

The prince from Poona with his spouse
To Theoor came to pay their vows:
Before the god Gunputti there
The lady promise plied, and prayer;
The sacred image to enfold
She vow'd with pure and solid gold,
His coronet with gems should shine
A crest of gold should crown his shrine,
'If, heavenly lord, thou give
'To me the bracelet dower,[2] and deign
'One year prolong my husband's reign,
'But one year let him live.'
So pray'd she, and the turbans set
With work of gold, and gemm'd aigrette,
Or pearl or emerald plume
She offer'd, and with weeping eyes,
Implor d the mercy of the skies,
To dissipate her gloom.
That night an answer came in sleep,
A dream disturb'd her slumber deep,
And Gunputti stood by:
'Not mine the power, or mine the deed
'Thy husband's life to spare or speed,
'On Shreeputti rely:
'Count me but lord of Modaks,[3] child:'
The vision vanish'd as she smil'd,
And so the night went by.

Hearken! I sing the witness
  Which former times afford,
How cherish'd patient Ramabye
  Her god-descended lord,
And how the righteous Nana
  The laws of heav'n ador'd.

Next day—that Wednesday dark and drear—
  The lady left her anxious bed,
She sought her lord, his tent was near,
  Alas! her noble lord was dead!
Yet never tear bedimm'd her eye,
The lovely lady Ramabye;
With firm and rapid step she trod
Her vow once more before the god,
  Her latest vow to pay;
Thorough the glowing gate of fire
That open'd from her husband's pyre,
  To tread the darksome way.
Far through the land the rumour went
Of pious Ramabye's intent,
And east and west the call was sent,
  And speeded south and north;
With sacred basil[4] haste to deck
Her friends their lady's graceful neck;
Cast off the gauds of worldly pride,
Her final garb she bade provide,
  For that dread journeying forth.
She yielded to Gopika's[5] prayer,
Narayenrao to summon there,
Her husband's brother and his heir,
  And Raghoba[6] they call:
How youthful prince may best behave
She taught with many a precept grave;

And Raghoba with solemn word
She charg'd his nephew's throne to guard,
  Word that should fruitless fall!
Calmly she check'd the tears that fell,
Calmly she bade her last farewell;
And while the assembled crowds proclaim
Their Madhoorao's beloved name,
And shout thro' heaven his glorious fame,
Calmly she went to meet the flame,
  And bless'd them one and all.
Hearken! I sing the witness
  Which former times afford,
How cherish'd patient Ramabye
  Her god-descended lord,
And how the righteous Nana
  The laws of heav'n ador'd.

Thus Ramabye prepar'd to tread
The footsteps of her husband dead;
In showers the leaves of gold were flung,
In every ear the drum-beat rung,
While all the air was dim and sweet
With spicèd powders, as was meet,
And all the Peshwa's host array'd
The sad and solemn scene survey'd.
On Moola's bank the lady stood,
High by the pyre, absorb'd of mood;
Worshipp'd the gourds, on Kashi's shore
With Gunga's sacred stream brimm'd o'er,
Then, while all people held their breath,
She mounted on the stone of death,[7]
And clapp'd her hands: the signal giv'n,
Fierce rush'd the roaring fire to heav'n,
  And forth her spirit soar'd;

In Indra's ark divine upheld—
Such boon her piety compell'd—
Like Sulochana,[8] side by side
She grac'd the heav'nly portals wide
With her beloved lord.

V

THE DEATH OF NARAYENRAO PESHWA

[Balajee Bajeerao Peshwa (the Nana Sahib) had three sons. The eldest, Viswasrao, fell at Paniput. The second, Madhoorao, succeeded him, but died of consumption at Theoor in 1771 (*vide* Ballad IV. on the Suttee of Ramabye). He was succeeded by his brother Narayenrao, who was murdered the year after his accession. There is no positive proof that his uncle, Ragoonathrao or Raghoba, was accessory to the crime, though he was and is generally suspected of having been so. It is nearly certain that his infamous wife, Anundi Bai, was the instigator of it. Narayenrao was only 18 when he was assassinated.]

ERE Madhoorao the throne forsook,
And ere his thread was riv'n,
What princely eye his glance could brook?
How tower'd his might to heav'n!
But what avail'd the tribute sent
From Delhi's marble towers?
The moment came, his thread was rent,
To Dada[1] fell his powers.
When on the fatal bed he lay,
'Narayenrao, my hest obey,
'With kind and kinglike eye survey
'The guardian that I give;
'His heart be thine; and, Dada, thou
'With loyal hand and open brow,
'Protect him, watch him, then as now.'
He said and ceas'd to live.
The light that o'er the Deccan shone
Is quench'd in showers of gore,
The glorious gem we gaz'd upon
Vanish'd for evermore.

Fraudful the heart, unleal the sword
That fell on thee, our murder'd lord.

When all the mourning rites were done,
The prince and guardian sought the throne,
Which, in Satara's fortress high,
The monarch of a race gone by,
Fill'd by an empty pageantry;
By him the robes and seal bestow'd,
The Peshwa trod the homeward road;
Loud beat the drums; he went to lave
His soul in Nassick's sacred wave;
But thence, to Poona's halls return'd,
With jealous fears his bosom burn'd,
On Dada fix'd a watchful eye,
And lent his ear to whisp'ring spy;
Fast mov'd the scouts, and false surmise
Wove round the prince its web of lies.
Yet not the less that prince could feel,
And labour for his people's weal;
A bridge o'erleap'd the Moota wide,
And crowded folk had room to stride;
In branching pipes the water clear
Obey'd the busy engineer;
That Poona might be safe from foes,
He bid encircling walls enclose
Her bounds, but ere their strength arose,
The light that o'er the Deccan shone
  Was quench'd in showers of gore,
The glorious gem we gazed upon
  Vanish'd for evermore;
Fraudful the heart, unleal the sword
That fell on thee, our murder'd lord.

Three hours had pass'd since Monday noon,
The month was Bhádrapad, the moon
For thirteen days had wax'd and shone,[2]
When Summer Sing, the guard,
With sword unsheath'd, and kutar wide,
And faithful Mahmood by his side,
The palace gate unbarr'd.
To take his lord's commands, he swore,
Therefore his arms of state he wore ;
But loud the warning cry of fear
Smote on the sleeping Peshwa's ear,
He started from his bed ;
Distracted, through his halls he ran,
Nor help, nor succour found from man,
And last to Dada fled.
The light that o'er the Deccan shone
Is quench'd in showers of gore,
The glorious gem we gaz'd upon
Vanish'd for evermore ;
Fraudful the heart, unleal the sword
That fell on thee, our murder'd lord.

When fled the Rao with paces fleet,
Guard Summer Sing his flying feet,
With other soldiers, trac'd ;
And loudly all the passers-by,
Who saw their lord and Peshwa fly,
The traitorous quest embrac'd ;
What while the Rao, with fingers claspt,
Dada implor'd, 'Forget the past,
'Awake not wrath, protect me now,
'Grant me my life ;' and deign'd to bow
On Dada's breast his head.
Dada stretch'd forth a saving hand,

He felt the force of nature's band,
Awhile relax'd his dark command,
And, 'Spare the child,' he said.
The light that o'er the Deccan shone
Is quench'd in showers of gore,
The glorious gem we gaz'd upon
Vanish'd for evermore ;
Fraudful the heart, unleal the sword
That fell on thee, our murder'd lord.

Said Summer Sing, 'Dost thou protect?
'Forgetfulness is hard ; reflect ;
'As in an oil-press crush'd the seed,
'Our lives and thine are lost indeed ;
'Dost now desire thy life should end?'
Thus too spoke Toolaji, his friend.
Dada remov'd his hand, and smote
The shoulder cow'ring near his throat,
The fatal sign was won ;
One stroke suffic'd, his throne was bought,
The drum proclaim'd the murder wrought,
And Dada's reign begun ;
What hope or help? None else was there
To be the slaughter'd Peshwa's heir.
And she who plann'd the project base,
Her stealthy step was near the place ;
Oh! whence should vengeance fall?
For that which was ordain'd to be,
Who could resist it, he or she?
For fate is lord of all.
The light that o'er the Deccan shone
Is quench'd in showers of gore,
The glorious gem we gaz'd upon
Vanish'd for evermore ;

Fraudful the heart, unleal the sword
That fell on thee, our murder'd lord.

Yet think not all the menial horde
Like these were traitors to their lord.
Brave Chapaji the spot had gain'd,
His arms his falling lord sustain'd,
A worthy servant he ;
The naik too strove, and fought, and died,
Visram fell wounded by his side ;
Praise to the faithful three !
Vainly they fell around their chief ;
Who could assuage his widow's grief ?
Young Gungabai uprais'd her song,
Her sobs the mournful notes prolong :
'O royal gem ! whose keepers vile
'Have dimm'd thy glorious fire by guile ;
'O princeliest monarch of the stall !
'Whose cruel dam has wrought thy fall ;
'Narayenrao is gone ! the power
'And pomp of thrones were his an hour.
'The battle-steed of paces proud,
'The palki 'mid the adoring crowd,
'The wealthy hall, the armed host,
'All seen, desir'd, and touch'd, and lost !'
No more ; the royal blood was spilt,
A mighty funeral pile was built
Of timber massive, firm, and straight,
A candy of Bombay its weight ;
Of sandalwood eight maunds they bring,
The scent shall soothe the murder'd king ;
The wood is heap'd, the fire applied,
Narayenrao has lived and died.

The light that o'er the Deccan shone
  Is quench'd in showers of gore,
The glorious gem we gaz'd upon
  Vanished for evermore ;
Fraudful the heart, unleal the sword
That fell on thee, our murder'd lord.

Dupe to a woman's impulse fine,
Dada ! the kingdom now was thine.
Treason and falsehood walk'd abroad,
Not Kashi harbours mightier fraud.
The royal robes and seal to bring
Went Amrit herald to the king ;
With him the Brahman, priest and saint,
Preach'd Dada's right, and check'd complaint :
' Shiwa the prince to power hath led,
' And pour'd his blessings on his head ;
' Mighty the worship Dada wins,
' The reign of righteousness begins
' By Shiwa's power, and every breast
' With holy awe is now possest.
' The standard of his might unfurl'd
' Shall float for ever o'er the world.'

Thus far the bard Makanda sings
The glories and the crimes of kings,
And prays that Dada's kingdom may
Prevail till all has past away.
The light that o'er the Deccan shone
  Is quench'd in showers of gore,
The glorious gem we gaz'd upon
  Vanish'd for evermore ;
Fraudful the heart, unleal the sword
That fell on thee, our murder'd lord.

VI

THE BATTLE OF KHARDA

[The battle of Kharda, often wrongly called Kurdla, was fought on 11th March 1795 between the Nizam and the Marathas. Kharda is in the Ahmednagar district, on the borders of 'the Mogulai,'—that is, the Nizam's territory. The forces on both sides were very great, and the defeat of Nizam Ali was complete, but not more than 200 men fell in the battle on both sides. This was the last occasion on which all the chiefs of the Maratha nation assembled under the Peshwa. The real head of affairs at this time was Nana Furnavis. The Peshwa Madhoorao II. was young and in subjection. The Maratha commander on the field of battle was Pareshram Bhao. The young Peshwa, being asked after the battle why he looked sad, replied, 'I grieve to observe such 'degeneracy as there must be on both sides, when such a disgraceful 'submission has been made by the Moguls, and our soldiers are vaunting 'of a victory obtained without an effort.' But Grant Duff adds that in his time one of the great boasts of the old Silladars in the Maratha villages was that they were present at the *glorious field of Kharda!*]

O Nizam Ali! curst by fate,
Why do the royal riders wait,
With harness'd camels, at thy gate?
Why do thy councillors of state
  From secret council rise,
And ply their pens thy hest to write
To every Soobha: 'Arm for fight,
'Haste to collect your utmost might,'
  Shall Poona be thy prize?

Through all his wide dominions cease
The voices and pursuits of peace;

At Poona aim'd, the countless tramp
Of warriors crowd to Beder's camp,
  Where, many a mile in length,
Mooltani tents in goodly show,
And mighty ordnance, row on row,
  Display the Nizam's strength.
By God and by his Prophet swore
  The Nizam, o'er the Deccan fair
That Hindu prince should rule no more,
  Or Hindu lances shine in air;
And therefore, gath'ring foot and horse,
Forth launch'd he all his kingdom's force,
And, therefore, fir'd with ardour strong,
By march on march they roll'd along,
Nor blood, nor threat, nor promise spar'd
To rush on Poona unprepar'd.

Vain was the dream! for wide and far
Flew rumours of the impending war,
And day by day the breathless post
The numbers of the Mogul host,
The marches made, the rivers crost,
  To watchful Nana[1] told;
And no disorder'd hurry vex'd,
Or ignorance, or fear perplex'd
  The Brahmans sage and bold.
By Shreemunt's[2] will they nightly sate
Each liegeman's duty to debate,
And gave the banner of the state
  To Haripunt to hold.

And first the bodyguard they chose,
Men who had never flinch'd from foes,

Marathas all, and Vishwas brave,
And Pureshram his sword
Seiz'd, eager for the fight, and gave
His homage to his lord.
Poorundaray and Rastay came,
Dhanderay, Pansay, chiefs of fame ;
The plain before the walls was white
When all their tents were spread to sight ;
Their vassals throng'd each chief's durbar,
But others led them back from war.

The Mankurees,[3] with Daphalay,
Rao Rambha, Sardas Panduray,
Jadhow, Chowan, and Ghorepaday,
And Ghatgay, and their men,
The Gaikwar, lover of the field,
Wasoday, skill'd the bow to wield,
To meet the Mogul, rank on rank,
Their followers rang'd on either flank,
Beneath their prince's ken.
There many a Moslem, side by side
With stout Marathas, might be spied ;
Full thirty thousand Pathans strong,
With keen-edg'd sabres, march'd along,
Arabs and Seedees swell'd the throng
Of foot that went to fight.
Before them league on league sped out
From fiery Scindia many a scout,
Pindharees swift and light,
Rockets and arrows, shell and ball,
Came from the Peshwa's arsenal,
And well-fed camels, many a score,
To battle these munitions bore.

Through all the land the terror spread,
The terror of the Mogul force,
From home the startled peasants fled
For refuge to the Peshwa's horse.
Two and fifty squadrons stood
To guard the prince from wounds and blood.
Seven hundred guns 'neath Scindia strong
Like rattling thunder roll'd along,
Pindharees dreadful to the foe
With Holkar came, and many a bow
With Bhonslay from Nagpore;
And countless noble chieftains came;
How shall I sing each warrior's name?
Great in their valour and their fame,
But Scindia went before,
Doulutrao Scindia led the van,
With Jiwaba the artilleryman,
And, chief and leader, Shreemunt sway'd,
Him all the mighty hosts obey'd,
Three lakhs they were and more.

To Raja Shao the glory be,
Who gave the power to Balajee,
First of the noble Peshwas he;
His spirit all the army fir'd,
And Nana's cunning breast inspir'd,
Like heroes who, in days of old,
Follow'd the great Kshatriya kings,
The ninety-six by minstrels told,
In songs that sing of ancient things,
Who bore the flag of red and white
Before them as they went to fight,
The host, far winding o'er the plain,
Recall'd those mighty days again.

The army halts, the envoys go
With Nana's message to the foe.
Swiftly, the camp and prince to guard,
Long lines of cannon stand prepar'd,
In battle's shock to watch and ward
And save the prince from harm,
Was charge to Pureshram assign'd,
Kindled the ardour of his mind,
And brac'd his stalwart arm.
For [4] Savai Madhoorao till then
Had seen no strife of armed men,
And now 'twas his to win
On fame's steep height the earliest stone,
And honour for his honour'd throne,
In noble battle-din.
While doubtful omens seem'd to lower,
And frown upon the fateful hour,
And warriors fierce to Vithul pray'd,
And Haridev, with heavenly aid,
Their fortune and their prince to speed,
Noble should be the conqueror's meed,
And high the dower of gallant deed.

Meantime no pause the Mogul knew,
But nearer still his army drew,
His camp beneath Purada lay,
The attack was fix'd for break of day,
When either host drew out.
Three hours ere noon in shock of strife,
The foemen met for death and life,
With myriad yell and shout.
The Pathans led the first attack,
The ardent Moguls drove them back;

Sore wounded, scarce withdrew
Their leaders from the bloody fray,
Pureshrambhao, and Phadakay,
And Appa Bulwant too.
A messenger on camel fleet
The Peshwa warn'd of dire defeat,
And terror spread; but Nana bold
The quaking souls around controll'd.
His calm commands the chieftains heard,
And rallied at his wakening word;
'Doulutrao Scindia, march with speed,'
So order'd Nana; 'Bhonslay, go,
'Lightly thy Nagpore bowmen lead,
'With noble Holkar, towards the foe.'

To check the foe they swiftly went,
A shower of shafts before them sent;
The Peshwa bade his guardsmen mount,
Two-and-fifty troops by count;
Next the Pindharees, swift and light,
Were muster'd to sustain the fight;
They scent the prey and joyous come,
Incessant rolls their kettledrum;
Command and threat and loud appeal
Rallied the host to meet their foes,
Edg'd the Marathas' failing steel;
And fiercelier still the combat rose.

A soldier's glance around him threw
Jiwaba, and the juncture knew.
In flame and smoke his cannon woke,
And ruin to the Moguls spoke;
On both his shelter'd flanks advanc'd,
His musketeers' quick flashes glanc'd;

The Bhonslay's arrows flew like hail,
His rockets hiss'd like serpents dire,
Melted the Moguls' fence of mail,
And all their host was wrapp'd with fire;
The Nizam shook with fear and ire,
With fury and dismay,
As, driv'n against his wav'ring force,
The batt'ring shock of charging horse
Swept his loose lines away.

No longer on the bloody plain
Might the Nizam the fight sustain;
He gave his steed the scourge and rein,
And bade his host retreat;
But no relief in flight they found,
Helpless, confus'd, they yielded ground,
The fierce Pindharees gallop'd round
With lances red; and bated not
The scathing storm of shaft and shot
Like fiery rain to beat.
They fled, their camp deserted lay,
Treasure and baggage cast away
The plunderers did greet:
In headlong terror swept along,
At last in Kharda's fortress strong
Halted their flying feet.

Sweet the relief, but short the rest
Within its succouring walls they found,
Jiwaba's guns the fort invest,
And Bhonslay's archers scour the ground;
And east, and west, and south, and north,
To watch the Moguls' sallying forth,

They circle round and round.
Their general's orders bid them strive
To seize the great Nizam alive,
But not to slay or wound.

From Nana swift the orders go
To straiten the beleaguer'd foe;
To cut the stream that should supply
Water for his necessity,
To watch the passes toward the plain,
And seize each bullock-load of grain.
The injunction all the host obeys;
He warms their hearts with words of praise;
'The hero great, beneath your hand
'Who cowers upon the redden'd sand,
'The gods and fate have giv'n
'As prisoner to your prince's lance;
'Be bold, be wary, conquer chance,
'Sharpen your swords, your posts advance,
'And rest for aid on Heav'n.'
The words like brazen clarion rung,
And each Maratha's heart was strung,
And brighten'd every eye;
And deeply all the soldiers swore
To quell and crush the Mogul power,
Or on that spot to die.

All round the fort the iron line
Was drawn, the Mogul to confine;
The iron line of sword and spear,
Of cannon, gun, and bow;
And thirst and hunger add to fear,
And weary out the foe;

For fell starvation soon began
To sap the strength of beast and man ;
Camel, horse, soldier, side by side,
By thousands they fell down and died ;
'Peace! peace!' was all the cry.
To Nana fast the heralds ride,
The terms of treaty to decide,
And grant his victory.

Short the debate ; the treaty made,
The conqueror's wasting hand was stay'd,
Mushrum Moolmoolukha [5] was sent
As hostage to the Peshwa's tent.
From fort and palace all his power
Nana withdrew the self-same hour ;
And forth the Moguls came, and fast
Helm, shield, and arms away they cast ;
The Nizam following in their train,
They fled to Beder's camp again ;
Nor dar'd they stop, nor might he stay,
Till safe within its walls they lay ;
Nor seek they Poona now, nor boast
Of victories o'er the Peshwa's host.
Such hopes lie slain on Kharda's plain.
Where all their power was tried in vain.

Glory around the Peshwa's throne,
Caught from the scene of victory, shone ;
And many a gallant sword
Drew fresh renown from Kharda's field,
But all to Nana's wisdom yield,
And own him prowest lord.
With pomp of cymbal, pipe, and drum,
To Poona back the conquerors come ;

The giant kettledrums they pound,
And shake beneath the thunderous sound
  The elephants that bear ;
While high the royal standard shines,
Advanc'd before the shouting lines,
  And trembles all the air.
The chiefs before the Peshwa go
Greeting to pay, and homage low ;
Nor fails he guerdon to bestow,
  Or robe of honour fair.
His soldiers cover'd all the land,
As locusts countless, but his hand
  Was liberal to all :
The poor made rich, the debtors freed,
The vows they made in time of need
Paid to the gods who made them speed
  At Shimga festival.

For victory to Hari pray'd
Chimunrao Raghunath, and made
  This song when victory came.
The Peshwa laid the Nizam low
Beneath him, and the dreadful blow
  Patunday gave to flame.
Khundoo Fakeer the song doth sing,
  The Gondhalees are there ;
Ranoo—Guddaji—lead the ring
  In front, the wandering pair ;
Fullnath Gosavi beats the drum,
And such the lovely notes that come,
The sweetest songsters linger round,
Nor dare approach the charmed ground.

VII

GUNGADHUR SHASTRI AND THE BATTLE OF KIRKEE

[The last of the Peshwas, Bajeerao, the posthumous son of the murdered Narayenrao, had for his confidant a rascal named Trimbukji Danglia, who in 1815 procured the assassination of Gungadhur Shastri, the envoy of the Gaikwar, whose safety had been guaranteed by the British Government. The latter demanded and obtained the surrender to them of Trimbukji, who was confined in the fort of Thana, from which he escaped in September 1816. After long and troublesome negotiations, the Resident at Poona, Mr. Mountstuart Elphinstone, demanded the surrender of Trimbukji, and the immediate delivery of the forts of Singhur, Raighur, and Poorundhur. They were delivered up, but subsequently restored. For some months the Peshwa actively pushed his schemes against the British, and the wish of the latter that he should join in the operations then going on against the Pindharees afforded him an excellent excuse for increasing the forces under his general, Bapoo Gokla. On 1st November the European regiment, the 'Old Toughs,' now known as the 103rd of the line,* having joined, Mr. Elphinstone moved all the troops at his command to Kirkee, three or four miles from Poona, and on the other side of the rivers Moota and Moola, which unite at Poona. On 5th November the battle of Kirkee was fought, and, in spite of its preponderance of force, the Peshwa's army was utterly routed. Colonel Burr, though suffering under an incurable malady, commanded the British forces with 'his wonted coolness and firmness' (Grant Duff). The historian, Major Grant Duff, who was then an assistant to Mr. Elphinstone, was present at the battle.]

No Peshwa of the Deccan
E'er felt so dire a blow,
The stroke that slew Gungadhur
Their empire too laid low.

* 2nd Battalion Royal Dublin Fusileers.

Dark was the crime, and darker
The imperial doom of woe.

I sing to those who wonder
Why war again upsprung,
Why round the Peshwa's palace
The English bullets sung,
The story of the Shastri
Whose sacred blood was spilt,
And how the English madden'd
To learn the tale of guilt;
And how, their fury to appease,
The Peshwa bid his guardsmen seize
Trimbukji Danglia; and the keys
Of Thana on him turn'd.
There, in an English fortress strong
Coop'd up, the agent of the wrong
With sullen anger burn'd.
Six months pass'd by, his crafty head
Devis'd a scheme, the villain fled;
Men mock'd the English power, and said
Their friendship might be spurn'd.
No Peshwa of the Deccan
E'er felt so dire a blow,
The stroke that slew Gungadhur
Their empire too laid low.
Dark was the crime, and darker
The imperial doom of woe.

His servant's freedom to achieve
Strong forts, wide lands, and lordships great,
Thus vow'd the Peshwa, should receive
The hand that burst his prison gate.

Full little reck'd that cunning lord
Of ang'ring thus his foes abhorr'd,
  Though well their will knew he;
He dubb'd them tyrants, and he swore
That Bassein's chiefship rich should dower
  The hand that set him free.
Vast promise thus the Peshwa made,
Nor spar'd resort to holier aid;
To Punderpore went he, and pray'd
  In humble pilgrim guise:
From Vithoba to Mhowlee sped,
There once again he bow'd his head
  To supplicate the skies.
Keen and more keen he grew each day
His servant dear to win away;
Govindrao Kaleh lent his aid;
Long plann'd, at last the effort made
  Triumph'd, and won the prize.
No Peshwa of the Deccan
  E'er felt so dire a blow,
The stroke that slew Gungadhur
  Their empire too laid low.
Dark was the crime, and darker
  The imperial doom of woe.

To Gokhleh's ears the tidings flew,
His hour the gallant leader knew,
From Poona forth his host he drew.
Trembled beneath their marching feet
The island where the waters meet;
Thence, where the foe had pitch'd his tent
On Kirki's plain, they forward went;
One moment face to face they stood,
Then clos'd in tumult, dust, and blood,

While shook the earth and heav'n.
His vanguard Bapoo Gokhleh led,
Forward he rush'd, and round his head
The death-shot hiss'd like lev'n.
The English guns fir'd fast and well,
And many a gallant soldier fell;
On both sides lay the dead.
And still undaunted, youth and eld
Charg'd desperate, and the carnage swell'd,
And for their country bled.
No Peshwa of the Deccan
E'er felt so dire a blow,
The stroke that slew Gungadhur
Their empire too laid low.
Dark was the crime, and darker
The imperial doom of woe.

In Poona's walls the self-same day
Two regiments of the English lay.
At early dawn they march'd and tore
The Peshwa's flag from Gharapore,[1]
Thence, led with skill, they circled round
And gain'd their comrades' battle-ground.
There, on Ashwin eleventh,[2] befell
The dreadful fight of which I tell,
And thence the thirteenth day was lost
The honour of the Peshwa's host.
No Peshwa of the Deccan
E'er felt so dire a blow,
The stroke that slew Gungadhur
Their empire too laid low.
Dark was the crime, and darker
The imperial doom of woe.

The English general saw the foe
In confidence and number grow,
And many a line of guns drawn out
By cannoneers with yell and shout;
And Elphinstone was there and saw;
They bade their troops and guns withdraw
Back to the hills, and there they found
A stronger and securer ground.
No Peshwa of the Deccan
E'er felt so dire a blow,
The stroke that slew Gungadhur
Their empire too laid low.
Dark was the crime, and darker
The imperial doom of woe.

To call the English Colonel Burr [3]
A horseman rode with bloody spur,
That Colonel through the Ghauts pursued
And smote Pindharees fierce and rude;
But, summon'd now to worthier fight,
He march'd for Kirkee day and night,
His men forgot their weary plight
And swept the field with fire.
Oh! then as diamond shining bright,
Or emerald dazzling all men's sight,
Unmatch'd in valour and in might,
Did Gokhleh's fame aspire.
Lone as the moon which, far on high,
Majestic rolls through midnight sky,
While never a lesser light is nigh,
And gods in heav'n his praises cry,
His single force upheld
His master's throne, his country's fame
While—lakhs on lakhs—oh! day of shame,
His feeble hosts were quell'd.

The craven prince had boasted loud
To lead his men to victory proud,
  But soon he turn'd his head,
And fast to Mhowlee fled away,
While Gokhleh still maintain'd the day,
  And vainly fought and bled.
No Peshwa of the Deccan
  E'er felt so dire a blow,
The stroke that slew Gungadhur
  Their empire too laid low.
Dark was the crime, and darker
  The imperial doom of woe.

All day through Poona's streets there pour'd
A panic-struck and hurrying horde ;
  Unhonour'd life they gain.
Behind, some turn and face the foe ;
Hero and craven—both lie low
  On Kirkee's fatal plain.
The gallant spearmen sternly stood,
And perished like Marathas good ;
While wide the dismal wail outspread
Of fathers, sons, and brothers dead,
  And tears fell down like rain.
The moon is quench'd, the sunlight dim,
And this, the nation's requiem,
Sagan and Bibichana hymn,
  In melancholy strain.
No Peshwa of the Deccan
  E'er felt so dire a blow,
The stroke that slew Gungadhur
  Their empire too laid low.
Dark was the crime, and darker
  The imperial doom of woe.

VIII

HOLKAR'S RAID

[This is a ballad on the devastation, principally in the Khandesh and Poona districts, caused by Yeshwantrao Holkar in 1802 after his defeat of the joint forces of the Peshwa Bajirao and Doulutrao Sindia. Partly owing to this and partly to the failure of the periodical rains, 1803 and 1804 were years of scarcity and even famine in the Deccan. In April 1803 General Wellesley wrote that in the country to the south-east of Poona Holkar could not possibly maintain an army. They had not left a stick standing within 150 miles of Poona. They had eaten the forage and grain, pulled down houses and used the materials as firewood. The people had fled with their cattle. Between Miraj and Poona, except in one village, not a human being had been seen (*Wellington's Despatches*, I. 143). Later on he wrote that the entire Maratha territory was unsettled and in ruins. Owing to Holkar's plunder and extortion, whole districts were unpeopled and the towns destroyed. Every man was a plunderer and a thief; no man who could seize or steal would till (*Wellington's Despatches*, I. 240). The original ballad is by Ram Joshi. *vide* Introduction, p. xxxi.]

My spouse took up arms for the cause of the right
When Holkar and Sindia purpos'd to fight;
They clos'd; far and wide o'er the battle-field spread,
Like pots roll'd and clatter'd the skulls of the dead.
With one hand men struck, with the other they spoil'd,
Till before the Pathans all the soldiers recoil'd;
The host that was broken fell feeble and weak,
And quarter and mercy they abjectly seek;
But on like a famine the conquerors roll'd,
And caskets of jewels, and jars full of gold,
And all that was goodly of copper and brass
They seiz'd, and left iron to gladden the ass.

They stayed not to weigh or to measure their spoil,
They stripp'd off the grain from the sheaves on the soil ;
Not Chandi was safe, nor Gunputti the wise,
Nor Shiwa the ruler of destinies :
His Pindi[1] was broken, then who could expect
That the pots of the housewife a god would protect ?
No order was left, every rank was confus'd,
Preceptor and pupil were robb'd and abus'd ;
Every villain, and traitor, and rebel came forth,
And stirr'd up revolt from the south to the north ;
From the south to the north, from the east to the west,
From the sea to the Ganges the land they infest ;
The gold of the rich, and the rags of the poor
They strip, and the Brahmans they seize and secure ;
They bind them in prison, and sentinels stand
Around them, and tramp on each road in the land.
No escape ! from the wife of the peasant they tear
The pearl-studded jewel that fastens her hair ;
From the peasant they wrest all his hoarded rupees,
The grain from his grain-pits, the food off his knees ;
If any delays or refuses to give,
He tastes such a beating that scarce he will live.
But alas ! for the soldiers that fled from the field ;
They were dragg'd from the shelters that held them conceal'd ;
In three days or less all their lives were bereft,
While the Brahmans unloos'd in their prisons were left.
Through all the broad land death was marching in state,
The disorder and anarchy who shall relate ?
O Shrirang Almighty ! is this then the day
When the world shall in torrents be all swept away ?
Fierce bands of arm'd Moslem are harrying our home,
The Indus disgorges their squadrons like foam ;
The Hindoo with the passion of plunder is mad,
He has mounted his horse and in armour is clad,

His spear on his shoulder, broadsword by his side,
And archery, sabre, and javelin beside.
From the ruin that wasted from river to sea
Telinga and Kanara only were free,
Till Goa pour'd out all its infidel scum,
With glitter of weapon and clangour of drum,
And they wasted the land till a corn-blade of green
By the eye of an eagle could nowhere be seen.
The Brahmans like coolies were driven to bear
Loads of flesh and of liquor, the infidels' fare;
And knew, what long time they had heard from afar,
The tyranny, fury, and horrors of war.
But my spouse has return'd with his dog and his steed,
O lov'd one! thy comfort and presence I need;
Like a garland of flowers my poet is dear,
He went out to fight and behold he is here.

IX

THE STORY OF A SANYASEE

[This is not taken from any one Marathi original, but from a number of fragments.]

FROM the peak of Hurreechunder,[1] when the early sunlight falls
On the dewy woods, the torrents, and the mighty mountain walls,
From the peak of Hurreechunder on the distant sea I gaze,
And the rich flats of the Konkan, all quiv'ring in the haze;
The sea that in the morning, when the mists are spread abroad,
Is lifted o'er the skyline like the golden shield of God,
The Konkan rich with rice-fields, and diadem'd with palms,
Link'd to its mother ocean in tempests and in calms:
Here the Maratha rider, there the Maratha keel
O'er earth and ocean mastery bear for the common weal;
And as bright Soorya's[2] chariot goes flaming up the heav'n,
And the streaming robes of Neesha[3] by his fiery shafts are riv'n,
I raise faint hands to Mahadev, and bow my head, and pray
That the dawn of my country's triumphs may never fade away,
That her sun may climb the zenith to a noon of glorious might,
And remain undimm'd by tempest, or the conqu'ring shades of night.
I am but a poor Sanyasee,[4] and what have I to do
With the thoughts that trouble mortals in the world beneath my view?

All day I roll in ashes, or in flames that scorch my skin,
But they are but summer breezes to the fire that burns within;
All night I fight with demons, and their eyes are fiery red,
And around them crowd and gibber fierce shadows from the dead.
By prayer and fast and penance I fain would reach the height
Where Indra greets the spirits that are pure in Yama's sight;
I fain would fix on heav'n the thoughts that wander yet
Far back through years of sorrow to days I would forget;
From earth and the cares that bind it I would be for ever free,
And the hopes and fears of mortals, what are they to me?
But I once was a free Maratha, and like one rode afield
With a spear, a steel-lac'd turban, and a blue-bull leather shield;
My arm was first in battle, and in the hurrying chase
No steed in all the pagah[5] like mine could press the pace;
And when the fray was over, my voice the first would be
Call'd in the soldier council around the peepul tree;
My wife was true and faithful, my children good and fair,
And my home by silver Neera, the smile of heaven was there.
I knew the joys of battle, and the valiant man's delight
Who bears the sword of freedom through the fierce and headlong fight;
I knew the laugh of children, and woman's whisper low,
When I rode in Shahji's pagah, fifty years ago.
Of three young bright-ey'd daughters she was my chiefest pride,
My eldest girl Yamooni, who had just been made a bride;
Not yet to her husband's dwelling had she turn'd her maiden feet,
But well Mulharee lov'd her, and long'd her step to greet;

A youth strong, true, and gallant, in all the country near
Few back'd a braver war-horse, or pois'd a readier spear;
Cunning he was in warfare, in foray or retreat,
On many a Mogul convoy had dash'd his courser fleet,
And many a Mogul horseman, in gorgeous armour bound,
Had panted on his traces, like an ox behind a hound;
I lov'd him, and I led him, and he rode beside my rein
When the Duss'ra call'd to warfare from the mountain to the plain,
When to the flag of Shahji the gath'ring spearmen came,
And with swords around young Shiwaji the Mawuls were aflame,
And from spurs to highest summits, from rivers unto rills,
Through sounding Maharashtra the fire was on the hills;
Then rode we forth together, and the village cheer'd and wept,
As towards the camp at Ashtee the pagah through it swept;
Our hearts were high and gallant, but yet my eyes were dim,
And the forms of wife and children in mist appear'd to swim,
My soul was with my country, but my home was near it still,
The house my fathers dwelt in, the fields they used to till,
The well with the drooping peepul, the bullocks in the shade,
Chewing the fresh jowaree Yamooni's hands had laid;
That fair domestic vision then vanish'd from my sight,
And around my gloomy future clos'd the coming shades of night.
When next the bud and blade began to wake the wildernesses,
And the fiery eyes of Jesht[6] were quench'd in Ashad's dripping tresses,

When the hills were loud with thunder, and dim with blinding rain,
And Neera raving hoarsely toss'd high his yellow mane,
When the thatch was new on the roof-tree, and the kine were hous'd with care,
And in every field the ploughman was singing o'er the share,
Once more I reach'd my dwelling ; eight months of warlike toil
Had redden'd on my spear point, and fill'd my hands with spoil.
Much talk was in the village, for the troops of Beejapore
Had raided all the frontier, with marks of fire and gore ;
Around our earthen ramparts their horsemen had been seen,
And about our wells and gardens the fighting had been keen.
But the Moslem band was routed, for the patel's gallant son
Had captur'd its young leader ere the fray had scarce begun ;
He held him now for ransom, for his father's lands lay wide
About the towers of Mundroop, and beyond the Seena side ;
A youth of noble presence, stalwart he was and tall,
Truly to no one cordial, but gracious unto all ;
His was a form and feature a maiden to beguile,
Like the glad light of the morning was the brightness of his smile,
But his lips were firm and fearless, and a courage stern and high
Spoke in his calm demeanour, and his bright and stedfast eye ;
Yet fiercer passions dwelt there, for license, lust, and scorn,
Scorn selfish, prideful, sensual, their deeper lines had worn ;
On his broad breast the kinkob, round his princely throat the pearls,
Like a peacock in his plumage he daz'd our simple girls ;

I had seen their bright eyes glancing, and their shrouded features gleam,
When his stately step went by them, at the well or at the stream,
As they cluster'd with their pitchers, or drove the lowing kine ;
And their pure young hearts were heated, like water mixed with wine.
So I went to Rama patel, a brave old man was he,
His grandsons in the doorway were playing round his knee,
Near him the village elders were ling'ring on their way
Home with the weary oxen from field at close of day.
There too was the Koolkurnee,[7] a Brahman good and wise,
Brave to command the village guard, and sober to advise ;
And I told them all my boding,—'A maiden's heart will move
'Light to the hollow promise and the tinkling tones of love ;
'The eagle in the mountains the vulture doth not fear,
'Yet he will not leave his eyrie while the bird obscene is near ;
'Unclean may be the Moslem, but noble, fair, and proud,
'And he shines by the poor Maratha like the sun beside a cloud,
'Beware lest a maiden's honour be blighted in the glare,
'Dismiss the Khan, or slay him, or again I say beware.'
'This day is signed the sunnud,' the patel grave replied ;
'And ere the third day's dawning the gallant Khan will ride ;
Large lands in the Mundroop petta, and a patel's hukks[8] are giv'n
To my son, who yields to Maruti[9] the portion due to heav'n,
Twelve annas for the patel, for our holy patron four,
'For—praise to mighty Maruti !—he is rich, and needs no more ;

'So sleep in peace, my brother,' he said. I went my way,
And peace and rest flow'd o'er me with the quiet close of day.
Why should I tell my sorrows till all my sorrows cease,
And kindly Yama brings me another night of peace?
That night in this existence was the very last I spent
With heart and home unbroken, in undisturb'd content.
No more the song of children, or the gladsome smile of wife,
The unutter'd joy and gentleness, shall cheer my lonely life;
Till the river of blood is travers'd,[10] and on the farther shore
I see the blest immortals, I shall know a home no more.
Bright o'er the moisten'd landscape the following morning sprung,
Gay o'er the streaming fallows my bell-decked bridle rung,
As I rode to a distant village to knit a league of war,
Methought the bare blue heavens were bright as Indra's car;
And my heart was high uplifted, and ancient men and gray,
The swordsmen and the spearsmen, hearken'd my hest that day.
I linger'd there in converse till the round moon was high,
Then left to travel homeward beneath the midnight sky,
No haste I made, for on me the pleasant night air blew,
In the east the day was breaking when my village gate I knew.
The gateward open'd swiftly, and 'why so slow?' said he,
'The gods that guard thy threshold are clamouring for thee.'
What meant the bode I wist not, but forward rode, and then
I wondering saw the chowri beset by eager men;
The gray-hair'd patel sat there; and, starting as in pain,
He quickly rose, and stay'd me, his hand upon my rein.

'Nay, brother, nay,' he whisper'd, 'to-day thy home forbear,
'They are not there to greet thee who should thy meal prepare.'
He drew me to the chowri, and made the crowd retreat,
And motion'd on the cushion by him to take my seat.
'Narayen help us!' cried he, 'my brother, thou dost know
'The Khan has paid his ransom and won our leave to go;
'At yesternoon he left us, he gave my son his sword,
'A goodly weapon truly, fit for a mighty lord;
'The horse he rode thou knowest, the true Bhimthuree[11] breed,
No Moslem noble ever mounted a better steed,
'Nor——' 'Bhugwan seize the charger, good pateljee,' I said,
'How doth thy Khan concern me?' 'Yamooni too hath fled.'
I star'd, but understood not, and then the patel told
How—Bhugwan's curse upon him—the Moslem us'd his gold,
How his servants for their master, that freshly he might ride,
Full twice the steeds he needed did heedfully provide,
On every stage to Hortee, where his king's battalions lay,
How my child—she once was innocent—had stol'n herself away,
And how—I heard no longer, dark was the tale to tell,
Wild thoughts of bloody vengeance on my furious spirit fell;
I rose, I reach'd the doorway, 'Mulharee, where is he?'
'Where thou wouldst be, my brother, if the chance was given to thee;
'Though scarce they hope to seize him, respite the Khan may lack,
'For ten Maratha horsemen go like fire upon his track,
'And at their head Mulharee; rest thou, for all is done,
'Comfort thy kind Anundee;' so rov'd the old man on,
An aged man and kindly: but I bid him let me go,
For till I saw Mulharee no comfort I might know.

The dreadful day went slowly, another night pass'd by,
Ere we heard the tramp of horses approaching wearily ;
I rush'd to clasp Mulharee : 'Vain was the chase,' he said,
'Though closer, ever closer we follow'd as they fled,
'At every stage, my father : yet they gained the Moslem host ;
'We saw the camp receive them, and I knew that she was lost ;
'The plain was set with lances as a river-bank with reeds,
'When on the ridge at Hortee[12] we rein'd our foaming steeds,
'And he was safe among them, but yet a day may be
'When the gods shall grant a meeting alone to him and me.'
Thenceforth my home was desolate ; ere another Duss'ra came
My wife died broken-hearted for sorrow and for shame ;
Then Devi[13] leap'd upon us, and her mood was fierce and wild,
And she laid her bloody fingers on each remaining child ;
But me she spar'd ; I doubt not full well the goddess knew
That by murder or by battle I had yet her work to do.
The years pass'd slowly onward, and now the third was come
Since I rais'd a spear in warfare, or heard my captain's drum ;
When a hurrying scout from Shahjee announc'd a Moslem force
Advanced beyond the Seena of full a thousand horse,
With footmen and with cannon ; and the leader who but he
Who wrought the desolation that wreck'd my home and me?
Wide flew our captain's summons, and swift with sword and spear
The fierce Maratha horsemen gather'd from far and near ;
Four thousand soon were muster'd, while careless on the shore
Of Seena, camp'd and rested the swine of Beejapore.

We had thirty kos [14] to travel, but soon we let them know
How far and fast to battle Maratha horse can go.
Among the foremost rode I, Mulharee at my side,
Once more, for never after together should we ride.
At fall of eve we halted, short respite for our foes,
To breathe our gallant horses until the moon arose.
Then once again we mounted, and through the hours of night
March'd quickly to the southward, to storm the camp ere light.
For many a mile before us the land was rich and black,
And ring on ring of woodland was scatter'd on our track ;
The moon was pale and sinking, the morning streak'd the sky,
'Twas the hour when guards are careless that we drew the camp anigh.
Like panthers softly moving we left the woodland shade,
And join'd our long limbs softly where the hostile host was laid ;
Then, ere the nodding sentries had caught the chargers' tramp,
With the hundred arms of Vishnoo we clasp'd the silent camp.
'Har ! Har ! ' then all together, and the thund'rous battle-cry
Roll'd o'er the startled Moslem, and the lances, tossing high,
Like the flame of a flick'ring fire went rushing through the gloom,
Foreboding to the sleepers the bale-lights o'er a tomb.
I saw *him* leap out foremost, a noble sight to view,
I saw Mulharee meet him, the loyal, brave, and true,
I saw the war-axe lifted, I saw Mulharee fall,
I heard the shout of triumph, and the dying battle-call,
And my heart leap'd up within me as I clos'd upon my foe,
And drove the long spear through him, and heard his 'Allaho ! '

'Akbar' was lost in silence, but if it left his tongue,
Perchance his prophet heard it and the houris fair and young.
I left his writhing carcass, and gallop'd to the tent
Where the horde of purchas'd harlots who serv'd his lust was pent.
A score of shrinking women within its walls I found,
Who writh'd, and shriek'd, and trembled, and grovell'd on the ground;
But one there was who shrunk not, who stood nor turn'd aside,
With hands tight claspt and quiv'ring, and eyes dilated wide;
I knew her; god! I knew her; shame and remorse had wrung
Her limbs to horrid stillness, and paralys'd her tongue:
I rais'd my reeking spear point, I lower'd it and said,
And as I spoke she trembled, and the hair stirr'd on her head:
'O pure Maratha maiden! arise, come forth, behold
'Where in his bloody armour thine husband's corpse is roll'd;
'To-night, to-night we burn him, and thou with him shalt burn,
'And through the fire thy spirit to the grand old faith return;
'Strip off, strip off thy jewels, the gauds of guilt and shame,
'Busk for the better bridal which frees thee through the flame.
'Come hither, friends,' I shouted, 'behold her, she is blest,
'For Sut[15] hath come upon her, and her spirit shall have rest.'
Their praises rose around us, but I—I could not brook
The terror, and the horror, and the anguish of her look;

She swoon'd not, wept not, pray'd not, I did not hear her speak,
But oh! for a thousand yogas shall I forget her shriek?
Her shriek of fear and anger, how little like the voice
That erst in my happy homestead had made my heart rejoice!
And yet, like a far-off echo, faint, faint I seem'd to hear
Fall on my inmost heart-strings the tone that once was dear.
Yet paus'd not more the Brahman, whose fatal hand was laid
To lead her forth and deck her for the sacred last parade,
The pageant where her husband should ascend her funeral pyre,
And their souls and mortal texture commingle in the fire.
How pass'd the day I know not, for I was worn with woe,
I slept, and did not waken until the sun was low,
And then meseems remembrance was dead, or dull'd by pain,
And vague and misty fancies were wrought within my brain.
I sat beneath a horse-cloth by three cross'd spears upheld,
My hands upon my forehead where the beating pulses swell'd;
A vision dim of battle, of the flash of spear and sword,
Of soldiers slain, and women lamenting for their lord,
Confus'dly mix'd with memories of happy times gone by,
Old scenes, and dead affections, and contests brotherly;
Till up I rose bewilder'd, and wander'd from the tent,
And pass'd toward the river, unheeding where I went.
And there I halted musing, forsooth I knew not why,
Nor why on a mighty woodpile was fix'd my troubled eye,
Nor why the camp behind me, with music and with shout,
Was thronging on my footsteps, with golal [16] cast about.
They came, my merry comrades, the horns were screaming loud,
A litter and a palki were borne amid the crowd,

And a corpse was on the litter, to me methought unknown,
And when they reach'd the woodpile they set the litter down,
And rais'd the dead man from it; and then alas! I knew
My boy it was, Mulharee, whom the cruel Moslem slew.
Then again I saw the battle, but broken, and in part,
His fall, and my spear of vengeance through the cursed Moslem's heart;
And while I strove and labour'd to clear my clouded thought,
My eyes saw near the woodpile the gilded palki brought.
They laid him on the pyre, his feet toward the north,[17]
And open'd then the palki, and drew a woman forth;
With the speed of a flash from heaven the clouds were roll'd away,
The nightmare vanish'd off me, and my mind broke into day;
The woman was Yamooni, the dead man was my son,
The pyre, the shouts, the music—I knew what I had done.
She was wreath'd with sacred basil, and dress'd in garments gay,
And her arms were hung with garlands she fain would cast away,
But the Brahman's hand restrain'd her; she mov'd as if in sleep,
Or drugg'd perchance with opium to stupor still and deep.
Wide-ey'd she gaz'd around her, and knew not what she saw,
And I shrunk before her vision, distraught with fear and awe;
But when her eye fell on me, it woke, and fill'd with light,
And a shiv'ring thrill shot through her, and she rais'd herself upright,

And stretch'd her arms towards me, and I sprang towards her—I,
But the love of child and father was quicken'd but to die ;
The truth rush'd back upon her, her face grew fierce and wild,
She curs'd—she curs'd the father that sacrific'd his child.
Ay, by the blest Narayen ! no fiction I rehearse,
In every ear around us there rang the Suttee's curse !
All gaz'd on me and shudder'd, and I was chill'd with dread ;
They forc'd her from me struggling, and bound her to the dead.
Quick they applied the torches, the crackling flame leap'd high,
And shriek on shriek broke from it of woful agony.
I clos'd my ears, but vainly ; I brook'd to hear no more,
The torment of my spirit was worse than what she bore ;
I turn'd, I fled, but ever mine eyes were telling where
They saw the writhing figure, and flame-uplifted hair ;
And still above the drum-beat and horns that fiercely blew,
I heard in tones of anguish a voice that well I knew ;
That sight and sound shall never within me cease to dwell
Till mighty Yama calls me hence to a kindlier hell.
I fled on wings of madness, I reach'd the camp and found
My noble Deccan charger, and speedily unbound ;
I leap'd upon him madly, and rode into the night,
And then for ever vanish'd a warrior's life from sight.
I rode, I rode at random, but ever toward the west,
Nor paus'd for food or water, nor gave my charger rest,
Until he fell beneath me ; but onward still I sped,
With twenty following demons about my whirling head,
And dancing wild and chasing through every glowing vein,
Till I came to where the mountains descend upon the plain ;
And still I climb'd to scale them, o'er crag and cliff I bore,
By watercourse and jungle I heard the tiger roar,

But all things living shunned me, and I was all alone,
Till I reach'd this gloomy cavern, and they dash'd me on the stone.
For fifty years my dwelling within these caves has been,
And the world of living mortals has pass'd me by unseen,
But the fiends that dragg'd me hither they never shall depart
While the memory of the Suttee has place within my heart.
Now fade the fires of summer, the loaded west winds blow,
And the cliff's deep bosom gathers the heavy clouds below,
Cool from the sea the breezes are pour'd around my head,
But o'er the world of mountains a fiery curse is sped ;
Black o'er the grim Sahyadris impends the thund'rous gloom,
Through every valley wave on wave is roll'd the smoth'ring spume,
From fire-tipp'd hill to hill-top the lightning leaps and glows,
The roll of the stamm'ring thunder on its broken footsteps goes ;
Like troops of truant spirits, in flowing robes of white,
Along the sharp dark edges the hurrying clouds take flight ;
Wide o'er the southward ocean the sable wings expand
Of the storm the voice of Indra sends rolling on the land,
Moan the huge trees, towards them the cattle pack and fly,
And the dust like the smoke of battle is whirl'd about on high,
The gray rain sweeps beneath it, as on the tempest comes,
With heav'n's artillery crashing, its cymbals, and its drums ;
It strikes the cliff beneath me, its iron ancient foe,
And the baffled clouds recoiling rise surging from below ;
Now mixing, now dividing, they boil around my feet,
But through the formless masses I see one shadow fleet,

One fair frail shadow fleeting, the arms are toss'd abroad,
Dim as through smoke and fire I see them stretch'd to God ;
Night falls, and in the blackness my tortur'd eyes are blind,
But the wailing of a woman goes wide upon the wind :
Thus every sound around me, or storm or whisp'ring breeze,
Voices the ancient sorrow which robs my soul of peace.
No son shall light my pyre, no pyre shall burn for me,
The vulture and the jackal at my dying bed shall be ;
But oh ! were I stretch'd upon it, and such servitors were near,
With Yama's eyes beyond them, I would greet them without fear ;
For the gods are good ; I have suffer'd ; I have purchas'd heav'n ; and yet
Let the fires of hell receive me,—so I may at least forget.

X

THE BALLAD OF SULOCHANA

[The original of this ballad is the favourite of Marathi women, sung in almost every family. The legend is part of the Ramayana. Sulochana was the wife of Indrajita, son of Rawan, king of Lanka (Ceylon), who had carried off Rama's wife, Sita. She was the daughter of Shesha, the thousand-hooded serpent king of Patala, the lower regions, said to mean America.]

On the field of Nikambala the fatal arrow flew,
The bow of Luxmun wing'd it ; it pierc'd the hero through,
The hero Indrajita ; his gentle wife at home
In joyous peace was waiting to see her husband come.
While ponder'd Sulochana—'tis so the poets tell—
Before her startled eyesight a sever'd arm there fell,
The arm of a mighty hero ; she knew the shapely limb
That erst had circled round her, the messenger from him.
She fell as thunderstricken ; with melting heart she lay,
As melts the hail new fall'n in crystal drops away.
'O lord,' she cried, 'my hero, from whom the gods have fled,
'Tell me what woe has fallen, and where to seek my dead.'

Within the lifeless fingers she laid her husband's reed,
Paper and ink she added, and pray'd them to proceed ;
The lifeless fingers seiz'd them, they rais'd the pen, and wrote,
'On the field of Nikambala I was stricken thro' the throat
'By the swift shaft of Luxmun, my head was severed sheer,
'And my body cleft in fragments by arrows broad and clear.

'My head was borne to Rama: I wait thee; mind thee well
'Of the words that pass'd between us before this woe befell.'
She read and comprehended, and bade her maids appear;
'My friends,' said Sulochana, 'our end is drawing near;
'The arm of my lord has beckon'd; he stands and waits for me;
'He calls; oh! hasten, hasten, that late I may not be.'
The treasure-chests were open'd, jewel and pearl and gold
Pour'd like a fountain's water among the poor and old;
The cages all were open'd, and captive birds releas'd,
And the groaning, and the mourning, and the wailing never ceas'd;
The frescoed forms of heroes that deck'd the palace wall,
From them came sounds of sorrow, and tears were seen to fall;
'Indrajita, thou hast left us, thy lov'd one leaves us too,
'Dark will these halls of joyance become bereft of you.'

With the arm of Indrajita in a litter by her side,
She travell'd fast to Lanka, King Rawan's city wide.
When he saw the arm and writing, King Rawan smote his brow,
'My son, my wealth, has vanish'd, and nought is left me now.'
Mandodari, the mother, defil'd her lips with sand,
And shriek'd, 'O fatal morning, when Rawan gave command
'To seize the wife of Rama;' but Sulochana spoke,
'O king, ten-headed Rawan, give order that they yoke
'My car for hill Suwela where Rama's camp is spread,
'To bend my knee before him, and ask my husband's head.'

The mournful prayer was granted: she took her way content,
And with her bards and minstrels and myriad demons went.

As she came to hill Suwela, the monkeys saw from far,
The wondrous apes of Rama who muster'd for his war,
They cried, 'Behold, 'tis Sita, King Rawan sends her home.'
But 'No,' said Bibishana, 'no Sita yet has come,
''Tis the wife of Indrajita, 'tis Sulochana chaste,
'To die on her husband's pyre she speeds her way in haste,
'She comes to ask his head of Rama;' and behold
Before the feet of Rama on the earth the suppliant roll'd;
Her head beneath his sandals she laid, and sweetly then
She prais'd the king, and pray'd him, as the first of gods and men:

'O Rama, brave and gentle, reject not my appeal,
'The lord of gods, the prop of heaven, the spring and source of weal;
'Master of many avatars, a woman's tongue may fail
'To measure all thy greatness, but still let it avail;
'The tongues of my father Shesha, his thousand tongues have striv'n
'To praise thee, and grew weary, and his tongues were torn and riv'n;
'The lotus which bore Brahma, that lotus came from thee,
'For by thy feet mine eyesight is purg'd and I can see,
'I the fair-ey'd, Sulochana, I can read the ancient song,
'And Rama will not wrong me, for he cannot do me wrong.'

The bowman Rama listen'd, his heart was inly mov'd,
Whence came, he ask'd her, tidings of the death of him she lov'd.
Of the sever'd arm she told him and how it wrote the tale,
But Rama's monkeys chatter'd that the shift would not avail;

'Fetch the husband's head,' they clamour'd, 'let it smile here in our sight;
'Then, king, believe the lady that his sever'd arm could write.'
The monkey warrior Vrishaba straight, at the king's command,
Brought forth the head and plac'd it in Sulochana's hand;
Full tenderly she rais'd it, she touch'd the rigid brow,
And words of love and pleading with tears began to flow.

'Lord of my heart, beloved, what could not be has been,
'I deem'd you all invincible and me a glorious queen;
'The god of death shrank from you, his captive now you go;
'Speak, be no longer silent, lest shame increase my woe.
'Why did I send you from me unaided to the war?
'Why sent I not my father, great Shesha, in your car?
'To avenge your aunt your quarrel with Luxmun first began,
'Luxmun who wrong'd and maim'd her in distant Janasthan;*
'Were Shesha there 'twas Luxmun had drunk the bitter draught.'
As she spoke the words—a marvel—the lifeless features laugh'd.
Much wonder'd all who saw it, save Rama, and he said
To her and those who listen'd and saw the sever'd head:

'You err, O Sulochana, to wish for Shesha's sword;
'In Luxmun's shape 'twas Shesha himself who slew your lord.'
Much griev'd the noble Luxmun, but Rama said, 'Refrain,
'Your fate was thus: to turn it, or mourn the event is vain.
'Daughter, depart with blessing, weary your task has been.'
She took the head, and turn'd her, and thank'd him like a queen;

* Nasik.

'Restrain your army, Rama, that I may go in peace,
'Go to my lord in heaven, and all my sorrow cease.'

Swift travell'd Sulochana till she reach'd the fatal field,
She rais'd her husband's body, and laid it on his shield;
Then in a litter plac'd it, and hasten'd on before
Where a mighty pyre of sandal was builded on the shore,
Of sandal and the bel tree; the flame roar'd up on high;
It touch'd the clouds above it, and redden'd all the sky.
At the joining of the rivers she bath'd her as was meet,
And richly dower'd the Yakshas' wives who crowded to her feet;
Mandodari and Rawan, and many myriads more,
From the golden town of Lanka, were gather'd to the shore.

The pious Sulochana uprais'd her heart to God,
The comforter in sorrow, ere the final path she trod;
To her royal kinsfolk bending, she wav'd a lamp around,
And circling thrice the pyre she measur'd off the ground,
Then leaving life behind her while yet she drew her breath,
She stay'd and stepp'd upon it, the sacred stone of death;
That instant to her eyeballs immortal sight was giv'n,
And she saw the arcs of glory which spann'd the dazzled heav'n,
And the glorious gods that fill'd them, and all their wives divine
Benignant bent towards her, and showing for a sign
In their midst slain Indrajita, the lord for whom she died,
With a frame of heav'nly radiance, who beckon'd to his bride.
She stretch'd her arms towards him, and call'd on Shiwa's name,
And to peace and bliss eternal she leap'd into the flame.

NOTES

No. I.

[1] SAMB is Shiwa, *i.e.*, one with Amba ; स sa, with, and Amba, अंबा, the wife of Shiwa. Shiwa gave half his body to his wife, who is called Devi, Amba, Bhowani, Amba Bhowani, and a score of other names. Shiwaji was and is believed by Marathas to have been an incarnation of Shiwa.

[2] Rajghur, not to be confounded with Raighur, is a small hill fort in the Bhore State. Shiwaji took it when he was only twenty years old, and made it his headquarters or capital, till he removed to Raighur.

[3] The murder of Chandradevrao More, raja of Jowli, was one of Shiwaji's worst actions. He held the Ghat Matha or hilly tracts of the West Deccan under the king of Beejapore from the Kirshna to the Warna. As he would not join Shiwaji, the latter compassed his assassination by emissaries, who pretended to wish to negotiate a marriage between Shiwaji and Chandrarao's daughter. Shiwaji had assembled his troops in the wild hills and jungles, and, on hearing of the murder, attacked and took Jowli and subdued the whole of Chandrarao's dominions.

[4] The 'twelve harbours' of the Konkan are Alibag, Revdanda, Bankot, Harnai, Dabhol, Jaygad, Ratnagiri, Jaytapur, Vijyadroog, Devgad, Malwan, Vingorla.

[5] Torweh is a suburb of Beejapore.

[6] Bhivra, the Bheema.

[7] This is a familiar form of Abdulla, intended by the writer to be contemptuous.

[8] The sword called Firangi is spoken of as having been twisted round the waist in the copy of the poem from which the translation is taken, and which differs in some details from that which was published by Mr. Shaligram and myself in 1891.

[9] It was a good omen to meet the raja in a palki. The sight (darshana) of a horse, elephant, or palki at the time of starting on an expedition is considered very auspicious (*vide* Dharma Sindhu, p. 516).

[10] 'The Diwan' means Shahji, Shiwaji's father. He seized the regency of the Nizam Shahi dominions in 1634, and seems to have kept the title of Diwan ever since.

[11] Sumbhaji was Shiwaji's elder brother. He was killed in the Carnatic in 1653 in an expedition against the killedar of Kanikgeeree.

[12] The bichhu, or scorpion, is a double-bladed dagger, two curved blades about half an inch apart, and parallel to each other, projecting from the same handle.

[13] The copy from which the translation is taken calls Kowji the son of Shiwaji; the published copy says correctly Sambhaji, the son of Kowji. He was a devoted Maratha follower of Shiwaji, who, with Ragoo Bullal, was principally instrumental in the assassination of Chandrarao More.

[14] The usual offering to Bhowani was a goat or a buffalo.

[15] This is an evident corruption of Adnyandas (अज्ञानदास), which is the name given in the published copy of the original. It was Agrindas in the copy from which the translation was made, and which was obtained some years before the other.

No. II.

[1] I was at first inclined to believe that this was a mistake for Raighur, and so throughout the ballad. Shiwaji certainly made Raighur his capital in 1664, and Singhur was escaladed and taken by Tanaji in 1670. Grant Duff speaks of the expedition as having been organised in, and having started from, Raighur. Nevertheless, after a careful study of the geography of the ballad, it is clear to me that the author meant what he said in writing Rajghur. The course taken and villages passed by Shiwaji in proceeding from Rajghur to Pertabghur, by his herald or messenger Puntoji in going from Rajghur to Oomrath, and by Tanaji and his forces in marching from Oomrath to Rajghur, are given with sufficient distinctness, and I have been able, by the kind assistance of Mr. W. Porteous, I.C.S., Collector of Poona and Political Agent of Bhore, and of Mr. J. W. DuBoulay, I.C.S., Assistant Collector of Kolaba, to identify most of them. Shiwaji went to Pertabghur from Rajghur by the Madhea Ghaut, Birwadi, and Kolatpore. He would probably pass Birwadi and Kolatpore (Poladpore) in going from Raighur, but he would not go near the Madhea Ghaut, which is a pass from the Bhore State (in which Rajghur lies), to the Kolaba district, in which Birwadi and Kolatpore are. Kolatpore is undoubtedly Poladpore, and Mr. DuBoulay tells me it is still so called by the Kunbis. Puntoji, in proceeding from Rajghur to Oomrath, passes the 'mercantile booths of Yetya,' and 'the Doni Water,' before he gets to the Madhea

Ghaut. The former, 'Yetya's peth,' more often called by the Kunbis 'Yelya's peth,' is identical with the village Wehelasi peth (Wehela or Vehada, a myrabolam tree) between Rajghur and Doni, and is now the seat of one of the Mahal Kacheris of the Bhore State. 'Doni Water,' further on, and only three or four miles from the Madhea Ghaut, is a well-known spring renowned for the purity and coldness of its water, which is collected in a trough chiselled out of the rock. Doni means a trough. It is obvious that neither of these places would be passed between Raighur and any village in Kolaba. Tanaji's course in marching from Oomrath, after he had passed Kolatpore and Birwadi, led him to the Madhea Ghaut and then past the same two places, Doni and Yetya. I have had some difficulty in identifying Oomrath, but Mr. DuBoulay has no doubt it is the village spelt 'Oombrat' in the Revenue Survey Map of the Mahad Taluka of Kolaba (in which also Birwadi and Kolatpore are situated) and Umbrat in the Deccan and Konkan Topographical Survey Map, sheet 46. 'It is a small village at the end 'and at the foot of a spur of the ghauts jutting out into the Mahad 'Taluka, from a point between the Chandraghur and Pertabghur forts.' It has been somewhat of a surprise to me that there should have been so much difficulty as I have found in identifying the residence of a chieftain so famous in tradition as Tanaji Maloosre. Mr. DuBoulay writes to me: 'It seems that Shiwaji had a good deal of trouble with 'a caste called Donguri Kolis who lived in that neighbourhood (a few 'are still to be found) and made their living by depredation. He 'accordingly appointed Tanaji Maloosre, a native of Godowli, a village 'at the foot of the Panchgani Hills in the Wai Taluka of Satara, as 'Soobhedar of the Kondwi petha, which included the south-east portion 'of the present Mahad Taluka, to keep these Donguri Kolis in order. 'Shiwaji also appointed Yesaji Kank, a native of Rajghur, to assist 'Tanaji in this duty. Tanaji had a daughter or a sister—it seems to be 'doubtful which—who was married to a resident of Oomrath, and for 'that reason he made this village his headquarters. There is a tradition 'that a merchant, owing to the constant robberies to which his class was 'subjected, by means of Tanaji's good offices entered into a compact 'with the Donguri Kolis, by which, on condition of paying certain black-'mail, and once a year inviting one member of every household of these 'Kolis to a big feast, he was to be allowed to keep a shop in one of the 'neighbouring villages without molestation. This compact was carried 'out for several years, but on one occasion, at Tanaji's instigation, the 'merchant invited the whole of the Donguri Kolis without exception. 'The food supplied was poisoned, and the caste was very nearly ex-'tirpated.'

Returning to the geographical question, there can be no doubt that Rajghur is advisedly, and not mistakenly, mentioned in the ballad; and I am inclined to think the historians have been wrong in naming Raighur at all as the base of the expedition against Singhur. Rajghur is much

more convenient for any such purpose, being only about 15 miles from it, while Raighur is double the distance. Grant Duff says, and it is generally believed, that the stormers of Singhur, after the capture, set fire to a thatched hut or huts on Singhur to signal the news to Raighur, and the writer of the ballad says the signal was made by cannon. Either expedient was possible if the place to be signalled to was Rajghur, but not if it was Raighur, which is invisible from Singhur.

[2] Laghughur. This is certainly a mistake for Lohghur or Lohaghur, a fort near Lanowli at the head of the Bhore Ghaut. Visapur is close by it. These two forts, which are generally mentioned together, commanded the upper end of the Bhore Ghaut.

[3] The Madhea Ghaut is one of the passes of the Sayadris leading from the Kolaba district into the Bhore State. It is a few miles from Birwadi in the Kolaba district. Up to 1826 it was hardly passable for pack-cattle, though it is so now. A horseman might cross it.

[4] Kolatpore. This is no doubt Poladpore, a small town or kusbeh seven miles from Birwadi (*vide* Note 1).

[5] Daspati is said to be the title of a group of villages in the Ratnagiri district to the south. Nandawi, or Nandwi, is a village in the Mangaon taluka of Kolaba. There is still a family of Sawunts there. Wadghur is not far from it. Silam is probably identical with Shilim, a village near the two last named. I can throw no light on the identity of Parooche of the fifteen villages. The Gondhali from whom I obtained the ballad was a resident of Wadghur, and he was brought to my notice by Dajirao Sirke, or Shirke, a resident of the neighbourhood.

[6] There are five sacred trees according to the Shastras—Mango, Jamboo, Mudhook, Peepul, Wur.

[7] I have related in the Introduction the history of the adoption of the orange banner by Shiwaji.

[8] Mangalai, or Manglai, is the guardian goddess of the hill fort which towers above the city of Satara, and which is called Manglai Devi.

Wardani is the guardian goddess of the Par Ghaut.

The hill-temple of Parwati is one of the most conspicuous objects near Poona. All the above goddesses—Mangalai, Wardani, Parwati, Bhowani—are different forms of the great goddess Devi, the wife of Shiwa.

[9] Sakhar is a village two miles from Rajghur on the way to Singhur, and Khangaum about eight miles further. I cannot identify Deve or Devi.

[10] The casting down of the betel-leaf was the usual invitation or challenge to a high emprise, but it must not be mistaken as an equivalent to the casting down of a glove, as it was not a defiance. The act or challenge was called यशाचा विडा, or the pledge of victory. It was a very solemn formality, and to take up the betel-leaf, and thereby undertake the accomplishment of the task, bound the person who did it to conquer or die.

[11] The Kallian gate frequently referred to in the ballad is so named after the village of Kallian two or three miles away, and not after the town of Kallian in the Konkan. It retains the name to this day.

[12] Udebhan was, in point of fact, a Rahthor Rajput, though a staunch adherent of the Mogul emperor. The name should be spelt Udeban. His slaughter of a heifer and worship at a mosque must be regarded as the embellishments of an enemy.

[13] Bahiroba is a very favourite village god in the Deccan. He is the same as the Brahman Kala Bhairao, and is represented by a hideous black stone image.

[14] The tradition still exists that Singhur was escaladed in the manner related in the ballad. There is nothing in it which is in the least discordant with popular belief in the powers of the iguana or घोरपड. Every district officer must have had proof this. On at least half a dozen occasions I have, as a magistrate, heard of burglaries, where a wall has been climbed in an incomprehensible way, being accounted for by the police and others in exactly the same manner, viz., by the hypothesis that the burglar sent up an iguana with a rope tied to it by which he hauled himself up when the animal had fixed itself on the top of the wall. I remember once that a Brahman chief constable, a man of education, strongly urged this theory.

[15] I cannot help being reminded of Ingoldsby's lines :—

'Twenty and three, of high degree,
'Lay stiff and stark on the crimson'd lea,
'All—all save one, and he ran up a tree !'

But this is a true Maratha idiom. They do not say, 'all the 900 but 'one were killed,' but first make the statement 'all the 900 were killed,' and then add 'only one escaped.' Thus सगळे गांव जळाले, मात्र दोन घरें राहिलीं—The whole village was burnt, only two houses remained.

[16] पंचहत्यारें, the five weapons. Among both Rajputs and Marathas he was considered a good soldier who could wield the five weapons—sword, shield, bow, gun, and spear. The Sikhs had the same notion, though the arms were different. All of them regarded this fivefold panoply as sacred, and worshipped it when taking it on or off or when

going into battle. The mention of it shows that the sons of Udeban, and therefore, of course, Udeban, were Rajputs.

[17] मरणाचा पोषारव, dead-clothes. This probably refers to the Rajput practice of wrapping a saffron-coloured robe round them when they went forth to conquer or die. Innumerable instances of the practice are on record.

[18] It is not impossible that the person referred to was the well-known poet Tulshidas, who wrote extensively in the Brij language. The ballad itself is certainly the work of a Gondhali, but it is by no means impossible that Tulshidas may have been at this time in Poona, and have been sent for by Shiwaji to celebrate the event, and that the writer of the ballad refers to this, instead of inserting his own name as is usually done. Tulshidas Shahir means Tulshidas the Singer. The Mandai is the vegetable bazaar still so called and used at Poona.

No. III.

[1] The Bhao Sahib, as a millitary commander, was arrogant and foolish, and particularly so in abandoning the traditional habits of Maratha warfare for a pitched battle. He occupied Delhi, 'defaced 'palaces, tanks, and shrines, tore down the silver ceiling of the hall of 'audience which was coined into 17 lacs of rupees, and seized on the 'throne, no longer so precious as of old, and on all other royal orna-'ments. He even proposed to proclaim Viswasrao' (the Peshwa's son and heir-apparent) 'emperor of India' (Elphinstone). The famous peacock throne, said to have been worth six millions sterling, had been seized in 1739 by Nadir Shah.

[2] 'There was a large post erected between the camps by the Bhao, 'where challenges and duels constantly took place' (Grant Duff). This was not an uncommon practice, such a post being called a Run-Khamb (रणखांब).

[3] I do not know why Ahmed Shah is called the son of a slave-girl. It is probably an empty insult. His descent and early history are well known, and he was the son of Zeman Khan, the hereditary chief of the Abdallis, whose name Ahmed changed to Durani. The Marathas always speak of Afghans as Gilchas, or Gilzyas, a corruption, of course, of Ghilzye, the name of one of the great clans of Afghanistan.

[4] The Bhugwa Zenda was the ascetic's orange banner, the national flag of the Marathas (*vide* Introduction, p. xxvii). It is said that the Bhao had in the field not only the Bhugwa Zenda, but two of the more gorgeous and ostentatious flags known as Zuree Putkas.

[5] Govind Punt Bundele.

[6] 'Har, Har,' or 'Har, Har Mahadev,' is the national battle-cry of the Marathas. They are names of the god Shiwa. 'Har, Har, Maha-'dev Dongaras lavila deva'—'O Mahadev, the fire has lit the hills,' is, I think, hardly a battle-cry, as Meadows Taylor says, so much as a summons to arms. I have not come across the expression myself. It sounds like a verse of a pawada—हर हर महादेवा । डोंगरास लाविला देवा ।

[7] Shumsher Bahadur was the Peshwa's half-brother, the son of the former Peshwa Bajeerao by a Mahomedan concubine. Hence the Mahomedan name Shumsher or a sword.

[8] The Nana or Nana Sahib is the Peshwa Balajee Bajeerao. He died of a broken heart shortly after the battle. Gopikabai was his wife. Nana is a corruption of Narayen, and generally added as a term of respect.

[9] The Bhao no doubt fell in the battle, but his body was never positively identified, and accordingly legends sprung up about his fate, resembling those concerning King James who fell at Flodden.

No. IV.

[1] Nana or Nana Sahib, *i.e.* the Peshwa Balajee Bajeerao, had three sons. The eldest, Viswasrao, fell at Paniput; the second, Thorela Madhoorao, died at Theoor, as already stated; and the third, Nara-yenrao, was murdered (*vide* Ballad V.). The 'two lords of ancient 'song' are the mythical heroes of the Ramayana—Rama and Luxmon.

[2] 'The bracelet dower,' चुडेदान, chude dan, from chuda, a bracelet, and dan, a gift. This is a term applied by a woman to one who has saved her husband's life. Bracelets are the sign of existing married life, like the kunku or red mark on the forehead, or the glashri or wedding necklace of black beads, and hence चुडेदान मागणें, to 'demand 'the bracelet dower,' always means a prayer or request for the life of the husband. The bracelets are more precious in the eyes of a Hindoo woman whose husband is alive than the wedding-ring to an European woman.

[3] Modaks, sweetmeat balls. The god Gunputti is supposed to be fond of them. Cf. the following extract from a Bhupali or morning hymn—

माथां शेंदुराची उटी । हातीं मींदकांची वाटी
शोभे कस्तूरी ललाटीं । ऐसा गणपती साजिरा ।

'I salute the handsome god Gunputti whose head is ornamented with

'red lead, who holds in his hand a dish of modaks, and whose forehead 'is marked with musk.'

[4] The sacred basil, or tulsi, is the most sacred of all Hindu plants. Every pious Hindu's house has a small plant of sacred basil growing in the courtyard or verandah on a small pedestal of earth or masonry called the tulsi brindavan, and every morning, after bathing, this plant is worshipped by both male and female members of the household, by the latter with special devotion. The legend on the origin of the cult will be found in a paper read by me before the Bombay Anthropological Society on 29th January 1890 (*vide* Journal of the Society, vol. ii., No. 2).

[5] Gopikabai was her mother-in-law, the widow of Nana Sahib.

[6] Raghoba, the usual name of Ragonathrao, the uncle of Madhoorao and Narayenrao (*vide* Ballad V.).

[7] Stone of death—Dharma Shila, धर्मशिळ, the stone on which a suttee places her foot in order to ascend the pyre and the first step to the gate of heaven.

[8] Sulochana (*vide* Ballad X.).

No. V.

[1] Dada or Dada Sahib is Ragonathrao, more commonly known as Raghoba, the uncle of the dying Peshwa and of his successor. He had been imprisoned by Madhoorao and was again imprisoned by Narayenrao. He was a weak, rather than a bad man, and dominated by his wife Anundibai, an unscrupulous and violent woman, between whom and Gopikabai, the mother of Narayenrao and Madhoorao, the bitterest hostility existed.

[2] That is to say, Bhadrapad Shood Triyodashi (भाद्रपद शुद्ध त्रयोदशी), the thirteenth day of the bright half of the month Bhadrapad (August-September). The Hindus reckon by lunar months, divided into two halves each of 15 days, one 'shood,' when the moon is waxing, the other 'wud,' when the moon is waning, or the bright and dark halves of the month.

No. VI.

[1] Nana Furnavis. His real name was Balajee Janardhun.

[2] Shreemunt simply means noble or rich or illustrious, but is here used to designate the Peshwa.

[3] Mankuree literally means a great man, but it was originally the name by which those Marathas who had been munsubdars (holders of rank dependent on the number of horse commanded, as of 500, 1000,

5000, and so on) under the Mahomedan dynasties of the Deccan were distinguished. Latterly every Maratha who had a body of horse under him assumed the title.

[4] Savai Madhoorao. The second Madhoorao was called Savai to distinguish him from the first or Thorela Madhoorao. It is a term of flattery.

[5] That is, Musheer-ool-Moolk, the Nizam's Minister, who had insulted the Marathas by proclaiming in open durbar before the Nizam, while discussions were going on with the Maratha envoys, that Nana Furnavis should be made, if necessary, to come to 'the presence'—that is, appear before the Nizam. The cacophony of his name might well confound a Gondhali into the extraordinary corruption Mushrum Mool-moolukha.

No. VII.

[1] There were two battalions of Native Infantry (VIth and VIIth), and two guns, under the command of Colonel Burr at Garpir, on the right bank of the Mutha river, close to the present site of the Collector's office. On the 1st November 1817 these troops, with the Bombay European Regiment, which had joined the day before, quitted Garpir, leaving one company to guard the cantonment and 250 men to reinforce the Resident's escort, and, crossing the Mutha, marched to Kirkee.

[2] The bard is not very clear in his dates or descriptions. The battle was fought on 5th November 1817.

[3] There is apparently some confusion between Lieutenant-Colonel Burr, who commanded the brigade at Garpir and subsequently the British forces in the battle of Kirkee, and the Commandant of the Bombay European Regiment, which had been sent for in great haste, and was able, by great exertions, to join in time for the battle.

No. VIII.

[1] Pindi—the Phallic emblem.

No. IX.

[1] More correctly Harischandra. A full description of this old hill fortress, with its caves and temples, will be found at pp. 717-719 of Vol. xvii. of the 'Bombay Gazetter'—Ahmednagar District. The fort is 4700 feet above sea-level. On the west a horse-shoe cliff over 2000 feet in height falls towards the Konkan. The phenomenon called the Circular Rainbow is often observable from the brink of this stupendous precipice, when the 'Konkan fog stratum' rises, boiling up from below, as far as the summit of the cliff, without spreading over the tableland. The caves are Brahmanical, and date probably from the 10th or 11th century A.D. Below them is a large reservoir.

[2] The sun.

[3] The night.

[4] A religious ascetic. Strictly the word is applicable to a Brahman ascetic of the fourth order, the three previous orders being Brahmachari, Grihastha, and Wanaprastha. Before a high-caste Hindu can become a sanyasee, he must abandon everything—wife, children, property, etc.

[5] A pagah is a body of horse under one commander.

[6] Jesht and Ashad (May-June and June-July) are taken as respectively the last month of the hot weather and the first of the rains.

[7] The koolkurnee is the hereditary village accountant of the Maratha Deccan, maintained out of rent-free land attached to the office, as the patel or head of the village also is. The latter is almost always a Maratha by caste, and the former, who must, of course, be an educated man, a Brahman. The hereditary office or wuttun of patel or koolkurnee is very highly valued.

[8] The 'hukk,' or right, of a patel, means the possession of the hereditary office of patel, or headman, of a village, which in this case was conferred by the Mahomedan upon his captor.

[9] Maruti is the popular Marathi name for the monkey-god Hunooman, the favourite deity of the Maratha ryot.

[10] The river of blood, Vyeturnee, is the Styx of Hindoo mythology. The waters of this agreeable stream, which is several miles in width, consist of boiling blood and other more offensive ingredients.

[11] Bhimthuree in the Poona district was, with other parts of the Deccan, famous for its breed of the small hardy horses which mounted the Maratha cavalry.

[12] Hortee is a village between the Seena river and Beejapore, where the road crosses a high defensible ridge of hills.

[13] Small-pox. The name is that of the wife of Shiwa, who was, among other attributes, goddess of small-pox.

[14] A kos in this part of the Deccan is two miles.

[15] By certain acts of self-sacrifice, the human being attains to Swerga or paradise. 'Of such self-sacrifices, that of the suttee is the most 'remarkable, as it has also been the most common. The wife who 'burns with the corpse of her lord lives with her husband as his consort 'in paradise ; she procures admission also to that sacred abode for 'seven generations of her own and his progenitors, even though these 'should have been consigned, for the punishment of their own misdeeds, 'to the abodes of torture over which Yama presides. . . . Sometimes,

'instead of joining in the ring of mourners, the wife of the deceased sits 'awhile stern and silent. Presently, with wildly rolling eye and frantic 'gesture, she bursts forth into exclamations of "Victory to Amba! '"Victory to Runchor!" It is believed that "Sut has come upon her," 'that she is inspired, or rather has already assumed the nature of those 'who dwell in Swerga. The hands of the new Devee are impressed in 'vermillion upon the wall of her house as an omen of prosperity,' &c.— (Forbes's *Rasmala*, 2nd ed., p. 690).

Cf.—

Her face unveil'd, in rich attire
She smites the stone with fingers red:
'Farewell the palace! to the pyre
'We follow, widows of the dead.'

(Sir A. Lyall.)

The compulsory immolation of Yamooni on Mulharee's funeral pyre cannot be strictly compared with a voluntary suttee, but once it had been declared that 'Sut had come upon her,' a woman would have very little option left. Compulsory suttees were certainly not uncommon. The suttee of Sukwarbye, the widow of the raja Shao, was practically compulsory, though I believe the intrigue which led to it is generally condemned by Marathas.

[16] This is the red powder used now at the Holi and other occasions: it is obtained from several plants.

[17] The corpse of a Hindu is placed on the pyre with the feet to the north and head to the south. The south is the quarter over which Yama, the god of the dead, presides, and hence the practice.

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